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War declared on 'cheating' Tories

Labour and LibDems end parliamentary co-operation after Government 'rigs' fishing vote

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

LABOUR and the Liberal Democrats have refused to cooperate with the Government in all future Commons divisions after accusing it of cheating in Monday's fishing vote.

The spectre of ministers regularly being dragged back to Westminster from overseas visits and sick MPs being wheeled in for crucial votes throughout the final months of the present parliament faced ministers after the opposition parties announced they were ending "pairing" deals with the Government.

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duced a "smoking memo" — a handwritten note from Mr Conway to Mr Mudie, dated Monday. It read: "George, Two further names as promised — K. Speed, R. Shepherd. 4/4. Yours Derek". Several hours after the accusations were levelled there was no official government reaction last night. But privately senior whips did not attempt to deny the deals. It was said that Labour and the Liberal Democrats were being "bad losers", and that if the Labour and Liberal

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Saunders trial was unfair, Euro court says

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT, AND CAROL MIDDLEY

TWO HUNDRED fraud prosecutions appeared to be at risk last night after the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the trial of the former Guinness chief Ernest Saunders was unfair.



Newsreader Jon Snow

The court said that evidence Mr Saunders was forced to give during a City investigation should not have been used against him in his trial in 1990. By sixteen to four, the judges said that the use of the material amounted to "a remarkable departure from one of the basic principles of fair procedure".

Had these interviews not been used, I would have been acquitted. I do feel myself to be an innocent man. This is just the tip of the iceberg in a totally unfair and politically managed process to which I have been subjected. I never considered giving up this battle. It was not about compensation, but the vindication of my good name.

But the court rejected his demands for £4.5 million compensation and reduced his claim for nearly £340,000 in costs and expenses to £75,000. The Government expressed dismay at the ruling and said that it was examining the court's decision to determine whether the law should be changed. The Serious Fraud Office said that it would resist all attempts to quash Mr Saunders' conviction or to award him compensation in Britain.

He and his legal advisers were "considering all options open to us legally and otherwise", including trying to have his conviction referred back to the Court of Appeal.

Judge complains

A judge at Truro Crown Court complained that 46 forms had had to be filled in to satisfy the "paper lust" of bureaucrats and bring to court a youth he was sentencing for murder. Page 3

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

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New £2 will be coin of two colours

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE Treasury yesterday unveiled Britain's new £2 coin — the first to use two colours. It is embellished with a design tracing technological development from the Iron Age to the Internet.



Two sides of the £2 coin, in circulation from November

The reverse of the £2 piece, to go into circulation in November, was designed by a Norfolk art teacher — Bruce Ruskin of the Flegg High School at Martham. His work was chosen from 1,200 entries in open competition. The obverse bears the Queen's portrait by the sculptor Raphael Maklouf that is featured on existing coinage. The new coin has a white centre and yellow outer ring — comparable to France's rather less valuable Fr10 coin that has been in circulation for some years. The centre is in cupro-nickel, the same material as the 5p, 10p and



Two sides of the £2 coin, in circulation from November

50p coins, and the outer band in nickel-brass, a formula slightly different from that of the £1 coin. The £2 coin is larger than the £1 one, measuring 25.4mm in diameter, compared with 22.5mm. Mr Ruskin's choice of theme was deemed especially appropriate, the Royal Mint said, because it will be using all its most modern production techniques to have mil-

lions of £2 coins ready for general circulation. Angela Knight, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said at the unveiling: "The competition clearly captured the public's imagination. We were very keen to seek a fresh approach and Mr Ruskin's design is an admirable winner."

To make the coin more difficult to forge, the image seen on the centre depends on the angle of vision. Its milled edge bears an inscription: "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants", Newton's words acknowledging his debt to other scientists. Though the coin will be the first £2 denomination to enter general circulation, millions of £2 coins have been minted in six commemorative designs since 1986, when one commemorated that year's Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh. "The commemorative coins are issued to banks and Post Offices at face value and are legal tender," Graham Dyer of the Royal Mint said yesterday. "It was not our intention that they should be used as spending money, but quite a number have been."

The new £2 circulating coin will be available in collector versions in gold, silver and base metal from the Royal Mint in the new year.

Jackal questioned over attack on ex-M&S chief

By JOANNA BALE AND BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

BRITISH police yesterday questioned Carlos the Jackal, the jailed terrorist mastermind in Paris, over the shooting of a former Marks & Spencer chairman and the bombing of a London bank in the early 1970s. Two Scotland Yard officers travelled from London to interview him at a law court after a previous attempt to question him floundered last month when he refused to cooperate. The Venezuelan-born convict — real name Ilich Ramirez Sanchez — did not admit involvement in the attacks and dismissed investigations as "Zionist provocations". The Yard officers focussed on the attempted assassination in December 1973 of Joseph Sieff, the late M&S chairman, outside his London home, and on the bombing in January 1974 of the Israeli Hapoalim Bank in the City. Mr Sieff, who was vice-president of the Zionist Federation in Britain which raises aid for Israel, survived after being shot in the face. The

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which Carlos backed at the time, claimed responsibility for the shooting. Carlos reportedly told *Al Watan Al Arabi*, a Paris-based magazine, in 1979 that he had been responsible for both the shooting and the bank bombing. But since his arrest in August 1994 Carlos has said the interview was a fake. Last month, Carlos refused to leave his prison cell to meet British officers, accusing his guards of taking away his belt. Prison guards routinely take belts and shoelaces away from inmates to prevent possible suicide. French police have accused Carlos of killing 83 people in a series of attacks in Europe and the Middle East. His boldest attack was the kidnapping of 11 Opec oil ministers in Vienna in 1975. A Yard spokeswoman said: "Two officers are currently in France liaising with the French authorities as part of routine inquiries. Nothing new has emerged."



Ernest Saunders, smiling but silent after his European court victory yesterday

you have any problems with that I suggest you take it up with him." But Mr Snow, whose 85-year-old mother, Joan, suffers from Alzheimer's and lives in a nursing home, declared Mr Devlin a "fraudster" for calling a press conference and not allowing the subject to speak.

"This is absurd, it is a nonsense", Mr Snow said. "There he is, the only person in the world to have recovered from Alzheimer's and he is not even able to speak for himself." He told Mr Devlin: "You are not a civil rights man, you are a denial of free speech man. You have stood squarely in the way

of perfectly decent questioning." A pre-arranged interview with the BBC was also called off after Mr Saunders said he did not want to be asked any questions other than his reaction to the judgment.

Law may change, page 4

Manchester loses out to Wembley

WEMBLEY has been named as the site for the new national stadium and Manchester, its main rival, has been given the consolation prize of £60 million towards the cost of a stadium for the Commonwealth Games.

The long-expected decision to plump for the "Venue of Legends" ahead of the bid by Manchester was confirmed by United Kingdom Sports Council chairman, Sir Rodney Walker, in London yesterday. Now it has the chance to bid for the World Cup, the Olympic Games and the athletics World Cup in the next century. National Lottery funding will provide almost half of the cost of the £210-£230 million facility for the most famous sporting site in the country.

City moves afoot, page 41

SOUTH SEA PEARL PENDANT WITH DIAMOND FROM £15,000

JAPANESE BLACK PEARL STRAND FROM £9,900

WHITE SOUTH SEA PEARL STRAND FROM £18,000

JAPANESE BLACK PEARL AND DIAMOND DROP EARRINGS FROM £4,400

SOUTH SEA PEARL EARRINGS FROM £1,700

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Pairing proves scandals never come singly

WATCHING the debate on the Stalking Bill sat Jeff Ennis (Lab), the new-boy by-election victor from Barnsley East. He was almost alone on the Opposition benches. He looked totally bewildered. Perhaps he was too frightened to go anywhere else.

His fears are justified. At least the lights are on in the Chamber. The dark corridors of Westminster are far scarier. One of the curiosities of this administration's dying weeks has been the torchlight beaming into corners rarely illuminated before.

First there was David Willetts blinking in the glare, pencil in hand, whip's note before him. And now the light

shines into MPs' "pairing" arrangements. Let me explain them.

Pairing is normally a long-term arrangement: a Tory MP and a Labour MP arrange to consult each other regularly and to pair on votes where it suits both to be absent. But *ad hoc* arrangements may be made for a particular vote, a sort of one-night stand. A Tory cannot normally register a Liberal Democrat as a pair, but in exceptional votes where what counts is the headline figure of all opposition votes combined, this might happen.

Pairing is not normally arranged through the whips but directly between MP and MP, then "registered" with the



whips' messengers — servants of the House, good men doing bad men's dirty work. They inhabit cubboards on each side of the Members' Lobby and deserve their MBEs.

An MP alerts them to his pairing plans in advance, seeking their approval. They check lists. If there are no problems, the whips' messengers rubber-stamp the plans. But they are answerable to the whips, who intervene in tricky or unusual situations. Problems are referred up. "Pairing"

of which the Tories are now accused: pair one of your backbenchers, then send him through the voting lobby anyway. But you can only do that once, for the system runs on trust and is actually of more use to the Government than to the Opposition.

Without an operational pairing scheme, government Members must be on hand to vote at all times, whereas the Opposition needs only to appear sporadically and to make lightning strikes.

If the latest row has arisen from an innocent mistake, this is likely to have occurred at the level of the junior whips at least. If the Tories really have cheated, they will have done so

on the following calculation: that a government defeat after the European fisheries debate would have been even worse news than the allegation of cheating; and that there was a chance that the opposition whips might not spot the sharp practice.

Indeed it is whispered that the ruse may have been used before, without the Labour whips — in the past an often *doxy bunch* — spotting it. Donald Dewar may simply be the first Opposition Chief Whip to notice, talk to the Liberals, and compare notes. The Tories will just have to brazen it out, for apologies will achieve little: Mr Dewar is unlikely to call a ceasefire.

Howard refuses to reopen 'tainted' cases against IRA

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

MICHAEL HOWARD announced yesterday that the cases of 14 convicted IRA terrorists would not be reopened following an investigation into explosives contamination at a government scientific laboratory.

The Home Secretary told MPs that an independent inquiry into evidence had found that samples examined at the laboratory had not been affected by a contaminated centrifuge machine. But he said lawyers for 13 men and a dead woman, convicted of some of the most serious IRA bombing attacks in recent years, could make further representations about the convictions.

Mr Howard was speaking after a report by Brian Caddy, director of the Forensic Science Institute at Strathclyde University, into contamination at the Forensic Explosives Laboratory at Fort Halstead in Kent. His 43-page report, which reviewed all the scientific data in 124 cases between 1988-1996 in which RDX was found, criticised quality assurance tests and other omissions. His own tests found that the explosive traces could have had no "observable effect" on the relevant samples. But he found that the centrifuge had not been the object of a test

since its installation which was "scientific oversight which is unacceptable and is to be much criticised".

The report, which added that the consequences of the contamination could have been potentially disastrous, made 18 recommendations, including tighter procedures and changes to existing practices and equipment at the laboratory. The Government has accepted 17 of them.

His most far-reaching recommendation was the creation of an independent Inspectorate of Forensic Science to monitor the laboratories. Mr Howard said that he accepted that recommendation in principle, but would weigh up its merits against the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice's suggestion of the creation of an advisory council on forensic science.

Sean McNulty, an English-born IRA recruit whose case was one of those studied, was sentenced to 25 years in 1994 after being found guilty of conspiring to bomb an oil terminal and gas works on Tyneside. David Hammond, his solicitor, said he would be seeing if the contamination represented additional grounds for appeal.

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War on 'cheating' Tories

Continued from page 1

Democrat whips did not talk to each other, that was their problem. "Opposition liaison is nothing to do with us," one said.

Mr Conway declined to comment. But Mr Dewar and Mr Kirkwood said in a joint statement: "We find it impossible to believe that the double pairing could be accidental given the care with which the whip was enforced on both

sides. The pairing system is built on trust. If trust is destroyed, the system is unworkable. To offer the same pairs to Labour and Liberal Democrats in a key vote is conduct that cannot be overlooked or excused. It smacks of deceit and dishonesty."

They told Alastair Goodlad, the Government Chief Whip, that pairing arrangements were being suspended indefinitely. While some Conserva-

tive MPs tried to dismiss the episode as part of the normal machinations between the whips' offices, others were horrified.

A senior backbencher said: "We must grovel and get this over with quickly."

But Labour MPs were delighted that they had been given a perfect excuse to bring pairing to a close in the run-up to the election and to harass the Government at all times.

EU welcomes cull of 100,000 more cattle

European Union farm ministers yesterday cautiously welcomed Britain's decision to slaughter 100,000 more cattle, but said it could still be a long time before a ban on British beef exports was lifted.

Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, told his European counterparts that Britain would go ahead with a selective cattle cull. At an EU farm ministers meeting in Brussels, he said that there was little scientific evidence against a selective cull. He added that Britain would consider extending the cull to cover cattle affected by maternal transmission if this was scientifically justified.

Franz Fischler, the EU Commissioner for Agriculture, welcomed Mr Hogg's statement but expressed frustration with the delay. He told Mr Hogg: "It might have been better in terms of consumer confidence if this decision had been taken earlier."

Tories seek caning vote

Conservative ministers last night fought off backbench moves to reintroduce corporal punishment in state schools but were told that they will face another challenge early in the new year. Tory MPs backed away from an early vote on caning in schools during passage of the Education Bill but made it clear that they will press for a full vote in the Commons in spite of John Major's opposition to corporal punishment.

Outbreak's 13th victim

An elderly woman became the thirteenth victim of the E-coli 0157 food poisoning outbreak yesterday. She was the third victim at Bankview Nursing Home, Banknock, in the Forth Valley area. Yesterday 234 people across Scotland were said to be infected with the bacterium after tests confirmed a further 11 cases in Lanarkshire. Numbers showing symptoms of food poisoning rose by one to 405.

Store blackmailer jailed

A blackmailer who threatened to contaminate Sainsbury stores with syringes filled with HIV-contaminated blood was jailed for four years at the Old Bailey. Barry Dixon, 47, of Basildon, Essex, admitted demanding £100,000 from the supermarket chain. He told the company to leave the money beside the A127 near Basildon, but was caught after a police surveillance operation.

Jobs clear of stalking

Michael Howard has made clear that the legitimate activities of journalists, salesmen, political canvassers, debt collectors and private investigators would not be threatened by the Government's Bill to combat stalking. He said the Protection from Harassment Bill, which is due to complete its Commons stages today, would provide a defence of "acting reasonably".

Advertising squad

Company logos of commercial sponsors could appear on police uniforms and squad cars in the City of London under plans to raise extra cash. The force hopes that sponsorship deals could provide an extra £600,000 per year, but a spokesman said any sponsor's logo would be discreetly placed. The police are setting up guidelines and making a list of possible firms to be approached.

Inquest adjourned

An inquest into the death of a motorist stabbed in a "road rage" incident was opened and adjourned today. The five-minute hearing was told that police found 25-year-old Lee Harvey, an unemployed bus driver, with horrific stab wounds on a country lane in Hereford and Worcester on December 1. No members of Mr Harvey's family attended the grant at Stourbridge in the West Midlands.

Grant for gays attacked

A lottery grant of £75,000 which will help homosexual prostitutes and gay men to claim social security benefits was criticised by community groups yesterday. The money will be paid over the next three years to provide an extra outreach worker in Yorkshire for the national charity MESMAC — Men Who Enjoy Sex With Men Action to the Community — which gives welfare and health advice.

Christmas lights alert

Thousands of sets of Christmas tree lights from Taiwan have been fitted with inferior power plugs. Trading standards officers in Cheshire said the plugs, copies of a brand called PMS (model number 9245), can fall apart when used. Officers are satisfied the plugs were not fitted by the importers. Four Seasons, of Knutsford, which has advised customers to return the lights to shops for a refund.

Ruby Murray dies

Ruby Murray, left, the 1950s singing star, has died at the age of 61. Known as the "bearbeat" girl, she set a chart record by having five records in the Top 20 simultaneously, a feat equalled since only by Elvis Presley and Madonna. Her best remembered hits were some of her earliest, *Heartbeat* and *Softly Softly*, her theme tune. She continued to perform until last year. *Obituary*, page 19



Hello, sailors!

A hospitality scheme intended to offer warmth and comfort to 210 homesick American sailors aboard the USS *Aubrey Fitch* moored at Plymouth has attracted offers of help from adventurous single women as well as families. The scheme, called Dial-A-Sailor, has received 300 calls in three days. Most offer Christmas dinner, but others are from women wanting to meet a sailor of a particular age group.

Mr Jonathan Aitken MP: an apology

THE TIMES apologised in the High Court yesterday to Jonathan Aitken MP, a former Chief Secretary to the Treasury, over an article published on November 14.

The article reported the previous day's decision of the Court of Appeal on the subject of the citizenship of Mohamed Al Fayed and his brother. Mr Justin Rushbrooke, for Mr Aitken, said: "In the course of that report it was stated that the Al Fayed were

the source of the current 'sleaze' allegations and were involved in 'cash for questions' accusations surrounding former ministers. The newspaper, unfortunately, quite erroneously included Mr Aitken's name as among those of the former ministers.

"This serious and damaging accusation is, of course, wholly untrue. Mr Aitken has never been paid by Mr Al Fayed nor by anybody else to ask questions in Parliament. I should also

add that this allegation has never been made by Mr Mohamed Al Fayed himself.

"Times Newspapers have promptly recognised their error and have agreed to apologise for this untrue statement, to pay Mr Aitken an appropriate sum of damages and to pay all his legal costs."

Miss Patricia Burge, for *The Times*, said that the reference to Mr Aitken in the article was an unfortunate error and unreservedly apologised to him.

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Life sentence for loveless loner who murdered girl



Claire Hood: was stalked as she played truant

By DANIEL MCGROVER

A BROODING college misfit who raped and murdered a schoolgirl after stalking her for months was inadvertently exposed by his mother.

Neil Owen was jailed for life yesterday after being convicted of the brutal attack on Claire Hood. The 20-year-old loner, who had never had a girlfriend, strangled the teenager in woods near their homes after carefully planning how to ambush her when she next played truant.

After the five-week trial at Cardiff Crown Court, it was disclosed that Owen had been accidentally trapped by his mother when police called during one of the biggest genetic fingerprinting operations.

The detectives had come to conduct a DNA test on Owen's younger brother. But Maureen Owen stopped the police as they were about to leave and volunteered: "Why not test my other two sons as well?"

The court was told that Owen retained his composure, knowing that the saliva sample could incriminate him. When, a year and nine days after the murder, police returned to his home in St Mellons, he said: "I've been waiting for you to come."

He had rehearsed an elaborate fiction about a secret three-month affair with the girl. When questioned he said that they had had sex in Cath Coble woods when she skipped lessons at Ramsey High School, and that Claire was alive

when he left her that afternoon in January 1995.

The prosecution described him as "a desperate and devious young man" who tried to lie his way to freedom, caring nothing for the girl or her reputation. One detective said last night: "He was a ticking timebomb who turned to sexual fantasies and then murdered when he could not get a girlfriend."

Pam Bennett, 35, mother of the dead girl, who saw the jury deliver its unanimous verdict yesterday, said: "I am quite happy with the sentence, but I won't be happy until Owen is dead and in his grave."

Mrs Bennett, who has another daughter, Sarah, aged 14, would never forgive Owen for the "absurd lies" he had told about Claire.

The court was told that Owen

had boasted about the killing to his brother David as they watched a television reconstruction of the girl's last moments, but later claimed that he had been joking. After testing more than 2,100 youths and men, however, detectives found that there was a one in 160 million chance of the killer being anyone other than Owen.

He became obsessed by Claire when he walked past her house each morning on his way to college to resist the GCSE exams he had failed. He would regularly spy on her bedroom window at night.

Owen, who was hooked on computer war games and kept a hoard of pornography in his bedroom, chose to carry out his attack beneath the twisted branches of a dead tree, known locally by court-

ing couples as "the love log". He stalked Claire as she went to buy cigarettes instead of going to school, and followed her to the woods which he had learnt were her regular hiding place when playing truant.

The girl fainted as he grabbed her, but came round as Owen was raping her so he strangled her and waited until evening to roll her semi-naked body into a stream. When detectives found the body, there was a crumpled page of homework in her pocket on a poem about murder, called *The Suspect*.

Owen's mother sat alone in court yesterday as her son was sentenced by Mr Justice Buckley. Last night Roy Morgan, Owen's solicitor, said that there would be an appeal against conviction.



Owen: told court that he had an affair with girl

Murder case judge condemns 'paper lust' bureaucracy

By ADRIAN LEE

A SENIOR judge yesterday attacked the "paper lust" of legal bureaucrats as he sentenced a youth for murder.

Mr Justice Roulger said he was appalled that the teenager, Darren Lawrence, had not been sent to court previously. The 17-year-old was found guilty at Truro Crown Court of murdering Douglas Holman, a retired nurse, of Camborne, Cornwall.

The judge said: "I am informed that if a young person of Darren Lawrence's age is to be prosecuted for an act of violence then no fewer than 46 - yes, 46 - different forms have to be filled in to fulfil the paper lust of the bureaucratic element in our criminal justice system. This is grotesque."

Ordering the teenager to be detained at Her Majesty's Pleasure, he called for change: "It is to be hoped those who exercise authority will agree with me that the safety of the public and the maintenance of law and order are more important than the proliferation of desk jobs and the consequent paperwork and will take appropriate action and swiftly."

He said some blame must lie with the prosecuting authorities but "it is not difficult

to see how it was that, with their limited resources, other prosecutions were more important". The medical and psychiatric reports in the trial amounted to 850 pages.

During the seven-day trial the court was told how Lawrence had been in trouble with the authorities since the age of five. While living in a family centre in 1995, Lawrence had been involved in 28 incidents of violence or threatened violence and had been cautioned seven times by police.

The judge expressed astonishment that charges had not been brought earlier. His psychopathic disorder might then have been spotted. It was not discovered until he was on remand at Rampton.

The judge asked Detective Inspector Howard Stevens of Devon and Cornwall police: "How many times are the youth of Cornwall allowed to assault other people before being brought to court?"

Mr Holman was killed at his home with a screwdriver while members of his family sat in a neighbouring room, the court was told. A 15-year-old was cleared by the jury which rejected Lawrence's plea of manslaughter.

Detective Superintendent

David Haverly, of the Trials Issues Group, which is responsible for formulating prosecution documents, said: "It is unhelpful to suggest it is bureaucracy for the sake of it."

He said the number of forms involved could approach 40 if non-prosecution documents, such as fingerprint and property records, were included.

A Crown Prosecution Service spokeswoman said a simple case could involve as few as five prosecution forms. A juvenile case would add another two forms. "There are no unnecessary forms," she said. "We are always working to improve the system."

Other prosecution sources said privately that they were astonished by the judge's remarks.

Mr Justice Roulger, 64, has spoken out in the past. He once admitted sentencing a rapist to one year was a gamble and, two years ago, he ordered a man to pay £4,000 to the burglar he shot.

He was the judge who sat in the case of Jonathan Jones, the man convicted of killing his fiancée's parents, Harry and Megan Touze, in South Wales. The judge later said he was surprised by the jury's decision and Mr Jones was subsequently freed.



Schectman: claims *Say You'll Be There* is similar to her composition *Come To Me*

Spice Girls deny copying Israeli soldier's song

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE Spice Girls, the all-female pop group and past self-confessed Thatcherites, were at the centre of fresh publicity last night after an Israeli soldier said one of their songs was curiously similar to one she had written. Idit Schectman said she had consulted lawyers over similarities between her song, *Come To Me*, written two years ago, and *Say You'll Be There*, the Spice Girls' current hit.

The 19-year-old lyricist and composer said she was pursuing her claim through the Israeli copyright authorities and might sue. However, Gerrard Tyrrell, the band's solicitor, said none of the five Spice Girls had ever heard of the Israeli song. "The first the Spice Girls knew of this matter was earlier today when they turned on their radios. Little information is available concerning the other song - which we understand contains lyrics written in Hebrew, a language not spoken by any of the Spice Girls - but what is quite clear is that the Spice Girls have never heard of either the artist or the song."

He added that no details of any claim had been received and no legal proceedings had been issued.

Ms Schectman said: "It hurt very much. Although I

was flattered, my song isn't so famous and their song is. There are a few things that are exactly the same." She claims the tune and the translation of the Hebrew lyrics are similar. But Eddie Lawrence, a *Select* journalist, said: "It is noticeably similar, but not the same. The same could be said about any number of pop songs."

Ms Schectman hopes to



Tories: the Spice Girls

resume her singing career once she completes her two years' national service in February. Meanwhile the Spice Girls' latest record, *2 Become 1*, released yesterday, seems set to go straight to Christmas number one in the charts this weekend.

William Hill has closed its books on *2 Become 1* being number one at Christmas. Earlier some gamblers bet £500 at 16/1.

Judge jails gang in cashcard plot

By STEWART TENDLER

LEADING figures in a plot to steal up to £800 million with counterfeit cashcards were jailed for five years yesterday.

One of them, John "Little Legs" Lloyd, had fled Britain after suspected of being involved in the £26 million Brink's-Mat bullion robbery in 1983 but returned in 1994. The Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute Lloyd over the bullion raid. Last year police arrested him as one of the leaders of the cashcard plot.

The conspiracy was linked to Kenneth Noye, who went abroad after becoming a suspect in the M25 "road rage" murder of Stephen Cameron. Noye was never questioned about the cashcard plot and detectives now say they believe he was only peripheral to the gang.

Yesterday Lloyd and six other men were sentenced at Southwark Crown Court, southeast London, after pleading guilty to conspiracy to steal. Judge Rivlin, QC, said the plan was "as ambitious a criminal agreement to steal as one can imagine. If successful, this conspiracy would have given you vast sums of money."

He told Lloyd, from West Kingsdown, Kent, that he



Lloyd: fled abroad after Brink's-Mat robbery

Car-death suspect is killed in crash

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A YOUNG man wanted by police in connection with the hit-and-run death of the medical student Caroline Elliot died in a crash while driving another stolen car, police revealed yesterday.

Lee Davis, from Stockbridge, Merseyside, was in a high-speed car chase with police when the stolen vehicle he was driving crashed into a tree in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, 36.

Five days earlier, Miss Elliot had been killed by a stolen Vauxhall Astra while jogging in Sefton Park, Liverpool. Police confirmed that they are not looking for anyone else in connection with the incident.

Ms Elliot, a student at Liverpool university, died from head injuries. Her flatmate, Sarah Edenbrow, who was jogging with her, was seriously injured but was able to attend her friend's funeral on Monday.

Yesterday police said they withheld details of Mr Davies' accident to allow officers investigating the tragedy to personally inform the families of both girls.

Police had been chasing Mr Davies, for several minutes early in the morning of November 19, after reports of a

suspected stolen car being driven erratically.

Officers were about 250 yards behind him when he swerved off the main road and hit a tree. A Police Complaints Authority investigation into the incident has been launched as a matter of routine.

A 17-year-old youth from Toxteth has been charged with allowing himself to be carried in a stolen vehicle, and bailed to appear before Liverpool magistrates on January 20.

In a statement issued yesterday, Miss Elliot's parents Mike and Ann said that had not wanted revenge, and regretted that another young life had been lost.

"We are pleased that all the hard work the police have put into the inquiry surrounding Caroline's death has now paid off," they said. "We will continue to give the police any assistance which they may now require."

"It has never been our desire to seek revenge on those responsible for the tragedy, but to seek justice and to prevent the same thing happening to someone else."

"If, as seems likely, one of those responsible is now dead, we regret that another young life has been wasted."

New York court gives estranged couple's child a transatlantic future

By PAUL WILKINSON

A CHILD will grow up commuting across the Atlantic between his estranged parents after an unusual ruling by a New York court.

Joseph Fowler, aged 16 months, who has dual nationality, will spend eight months of the year in this country with his British mother and four months in the United States with his American father as a result of the decision last week. The judgment, yet to be ratified by an English court, has been questioned by British experts in family law who say it would put tremendous strain on the child and his family.

Jane and William Fowler had lived in America since their marriage in 1990,

and Joseph was born there. Mrs Fowler returned to Yorkshire with him three months ago after their marriage broke down. Last month there was a country-wide alert when Mr Fowler took Joseph from Mrs Fowler's home in Harley, south Yorkshire. In spite of a watch on ports and airports, Mr Fowler, an unemployed electronics technician, was able to fly with his son to New York.

Mrs Fowler, 27, a nursery school teacher, began a court battle for custody. She attended the New York hearing and returned with Joseph at the weekend.

"She said yesterday that she expected the ruling to be confirmed by an English court shortly. There is no ideal compromise. It is what has been agreed by both parties and is legally binding. I don't

think it's the best thing for my son to be ferried to and fro across the Atlantic. I do think the arrangement is bound to affect Joseph's upbringing. I am going to have to seek advice on how it will affect him mentally," she said.

"It will be very expensive in air fares as well. We will have to cross that bridge when we come to it. I am working and my husband is hopeful of finding a job so we should be able to afford it. When he gets to school age it will be arranged so he can go to school over here, but see his father in the summer holidays."

In New York, Mr Fowler said: "The whole thing is a nightmare. I feel I was left with no choice but to accept the decision. I just hope everything works out for Joseph when he is over in Britain."

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Saunders ruling may prompt change in law

'Draconian' powers under threat after Euro-court's condemnation

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

GOVERNMENT officials are expected to re-draft legislation that gives Department of Trade inspectors far-reaching powers to compel suspects to answer questions then use the material in the prosecution against them.

Condemning the way the evidence is used in trials, the European Court of Human Rights said: "The public interest in combating fraud could not be invoked to justify the use of answers compulsorily obtained in a non-judicial investigation."

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it would examine the ruling to see "what implications there are for UK company regulators and criminal prosecutions". But officials have identified at least 200 pending fraud and insider dealing cases which could be affected by the ruling because the only evidence is "tainted" in that it was obtained by inspectors under compulsion.

The case comes exactly ten years after the Guinness fraud investigation began and rested on questioning by DTI officials that began on February 10, 1987, when Ernest Saunders, then chief executive of Guinness, was summoned to the City accountants Peat Marwick McLintock.

Flanked by his lawyers, he faced compulsory interrogations across a table by David Donaldson, QC, and Ian Watt, a chartered accountant — both DTI — in what was the first of nine interrogations that would eventually lead to his trial and imprisonment.

The inspectors were investigating allegations that Guinness indulged in a share support operation during its takeover battle for Distillers in 1986. Mr Saunders had to comply. Failure to do so, under what his counsel, Michael Beloff, QC, called "draconian" powers granted to the DTI inspectors under the Companies Act 1967, could lead to a fine or imprisonment for up to two years.

George Devlin, Mr Saunders's human rights consultant, said yesterday: "It's

SAUNDERS SAGA

Dec 1986: DTI inspectors carry out dawn raid on offices of Guinness and Distillers
Jan 1987: DTI refer Guinness affair to DPP
Feb 1987: Saunders interrogated for first time
May 1987: Saunders is arrested
April 1988: SFO takes over the investigation
Nov 1988 & Jan 1990: Preliminary hearings at which Saunders fails to have transcripts of interviews excluded as evidence
Aug 1990: Saunders convicted by Southwark Crown Court and jailed for five years
May 1991: Court of Appeal cuts five-year sentence to two and a half years
June 1991: Saunders released from Ford open prison diagnosed as suffering from pre-senile dementia
July 1991: House of Lords refuses Saunders leave to appeal to House of Lords
Dec 1994: Home Secretary refers case back to Court of Appeal after application by co-defendants (Rimson, Parnes and Lyons) argues that prosecution failed to disclose certain documents
Nov 1995: Court of Appeal rejects appeal for second time
Dec 1995: Court of Appeal refuses leave to appeal on point of law to House of Lords

creased to 15, of false accounting, theft, and conspiracy.

Yesterday those interrogations, and obtaining of material that led to Mr Saunders's conviction and imprisonment, prompted a damning indictment of the Government by the European Court. The authorities, the court ruled, had breached Mr Saunders's right to a fair trial.

As Michael Beloff, QC, put it, Mr Saunders was a man stripped of his human rights and forced to incriminate himself in breach of the protection afforded to all other defendants — even those accused of murder, rape, robbery, drug dealing or terrorist offences.

The ruling appears to knock a massive hole in the armoury of prosecuting authorities to combat serious fraud, and to re-assert the centuries-old defendant's right to silence. The right dates from the trial of John Lilburn in 1637, when he refused to take an oath binding him to answer all questions put to him by the Star Chamber. It rests on the principle that the burden of proof is on the prosecution and that defendants are under no obligation to help them to prove their case.

The right has been called "the golden thread that runs through the web of English criminal law". But it has been eroded. Since 1856, a case established that the prosecution could use answers obtained from bankrupts, under threat of imprisonment, as evidence for a prosecution. But the Judges' Rules, drawn up between 1912 and 1918, stipulated that a person "cautioned" need not answer.

The first English statute expressly to provide for answers to be obtained by DTI inspectors under compulsion was the Companies Act 1967, followed by the Companies Act 1985.

Yesterday, the European Court noted that part of a transcript of Mr Saunders's answers had been read to the jury despite his objections. "Accordingly, there had been an infringement of the applicant's right not to incriminate himself."

Leading article, page 17



Road to recovery: Saunders with his sons and daughter in hospital after his early release from prison in 1991

The 'bewildered old man' whose business brain earns £800 a day

By CAROL MIDDLETON

ERNEST SAUNDERS will forever be remembered as the man who made a miraculous recovery from apparent pre-senile dementia.

Five years ago he was described by doctors as a bewildered old man unable to finish a sentence, name the President of America or count

backwards from three. Now he charges £800 a day advising clients such as the publishing company Richbell Strategic Holdings and Carphone Warehouse.

The man whose name was once a by-word for fraud (his criminal record is stamped on his passport) and whose brain was said in the Court of Appeal to be shrinking, is now back with the great and good.

He is welcomed at the grandest of functions and companies pay handsomely for his sharp business brain and his "shrewd and enthusiastic" advice.

His salary from his various consultancies is reckoned to be about £150,000. He receives a £75,000 Guinness pension and makes an income from speeches and lectures. He has two homes — a £250,000 house in Putney,

south London, and a £350,000 17th century house in Silesham, near Chichester, where he joins his wife, Carole, at weekends.

Their former house, a mansion in Fern, Buckinghamshire, had to be sold for £600,000 during the trial as did their Swiss apartment. About that time Mrs Saunders had a nervous breakdown. It was the love of their children James, 31, who wrote a book, *Nightmare*, about his father's experience. Joanna, 28, and John, 23, which helped her through it and she is now recovered.

Mr Saunders was sent to Ford open prison but his sentence was halved on appeal and he served only 10 months in an open prison after a doctor diagnosed that he was suffering from pre-senile dementia.

Patrick Galloway, a forensic psychiatrist at Exeter Nuffield Hospital, who expressed concern over Mr Saunders's inability to use a door properly in 1991, was unavailable for comment yesterday. Earlier this week, however, he said that three other doctors apart from him had had similar concerns. "We never made a diagnosis but all the doctors agreed there was some suspicion of senile dementia," he said. "Happily this turned out not to be the case."

In a recent interview, Mr Saunders angrily rejected suggestions that he had feigned illness. "The idea that I could persuade members of the medical profession that I had this condition is disgraceful. I resent it enormously," he said. "When I go to America and Europe I get a pat on the back for having come back from the dead. I get the opposite here in Britain."

Verdict another blow to Fraud Office

By JON ASHWORTH

THE STRASBOURG ruling is a blow to regulation of the City of London and is the latest in series of disappointments for the Serious Fraud Office. The SFO said yesterday it would resist all attempts to quash Mr Saunders's conviction.

The Guinness affair provoked a clampdown by the Government and authorities on what were seen as City of London excesses. It was the Department of Trade's job to investigate company scandals and collapses.

The SFO was set up after the Guinness affair to tackle large-scale fraud cases but prosecutions in high-profile cases involving Blue Arrow, Maxwell and George Walker flopped. Roger Levitt, one-time financial adviser to the rich and famous, was sentenced to community service.

City regulators have sought to co-operate more closely since the Guinness affair, but implicitly acknowledge that scope for abuse remained. There has long been talk of a "front-running" ring, in which brokers use inside information to profit on share deals, channelling the gains through secretive offshore havens. Details of suspicious share dealing are routinely passed by the Stock Exchange to the DTI. The prospect of "another Guinness" has probably done more than anything to focus City minds.

The fall-out led to a closing of ranks by City regulators, and made bankers and brokers think twice before agreeing to act as advisers to a deal. No amount of success fees could compensate for the damage to a firm's reputation.

"The case has been exhaustively heard in the English courts," the SFO said. "Two appeal court hearings have upheld the prosecution's case."

The European Court of Human Rights said it could not speculate on whether the outcome of the trial would have been any different had use not been made of the Department of Trade and Industry transcripts by the prosecution.

The ruling could have implications for Mr Saunders's co-defendants, who are pursuing their own claims. Anthony Parnes, the stockbroker implicated in the affair, could have the most to gain. It appears that evidence in the DTI transcripts was fundamental to the prosecution, and without them there would have been no case against him.

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Lawyers consider claim for redress

By FRANCES GIBB

ERNEST SAUNDERS hinted at fresh legal actions yesterday, including the possibility of a compensation claim against the Government.

He ran up a legal aid bill of £1.28 million in defence costs for the criminal trial that was held to be unfair yesterday. But he funded the six-year battle to Strasbourg himself, with the help of friends.

He has earned an estimated £125,000 a year from consultancy work since being released from prison and has had a pension from Guinness since being dismissed in 1987.

Yesterday the court rejected his claims totalling more than £4.6 million for lost income and expenses and also cut his plea for almost £340,000 in court costs and expenses to £75,000. Any compensation claim against the Government would depend on whether the Home Secretary referred his conviction back to the Court of Appeal and whether it was quashed. Without that, he is still a convicted criminal.

Yesterday all the signs were that that was extremely unlikely. Government officials pointed to the European judges' comment that the outcome of this trial might not have been any different, even if the DTI evidence had not been used. The Serious Fraud Office said it would resist all attempts to have the conviction quashed or compensation awarded.

Mr Saunders indicated that legal action for compensation was one option. "My advisers and I will now be considering all the options open to us legally and otherwise."



Devlin: pleased

Private eye who spotted unfairness

GEORGE DEVLIN, the multimillionaire and self-styled "human rights consultant" to Ernest Saunders, had reason to look pleased with himself yesterday.

For six years he has worked more or less full-time preparing the case first for the European Commission on Human Rights and then for the European court. "I was the one," he said proudly, "who first identified that the use of this evidence in Mr Saunders's trial was unfair."

Mr Devlin, 55, a tax exile with homes in Switzerland, France and London, started as a litigation and common law solicitor's clerk in a City law firm. He then turned private eye, spending 20 years specialising in investigations for solicitors and counsel in complex fraud. He was a principal in the company, Devlin & Co, now run by his son.

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Coronation Street hit by strong bidding from Roadshow

Aunty's antiques knock down ITV's old soap

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

AN ATTEMPT by ITV to boost the flagging ratings of *Coronation Street* by launching a fourth weekly episode is failing in the face of unforeseen opposition from BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*.

Audiences for the soap opera's Sunday evening slot have fallen from 15.7 million since its launch on November 24 to 13.5 million, compared to a steady 10 million for *Antiques Roadshow*.

Michael Jackson, controller of BBC1, said: "*Antiques Roadshow* is probably the most successful programme we have had against *Coronation Street* since *Stepie and Son* in the 1960s."

Mr Jackson said that the fourth *Coronation Street* episode was not natural weekend viewing. "I am not convinced that every *Coronation Street* viewer wants to see it on a Sunday," he said. It was a time for families to sit down together, but the programme appealed mainly to a female

audience, he added. Mr Jackson's comments come at a difficult time for *Coronation Street*, which has recently lost its position as the nation's most popular programme to BBC's *EastEnders*.

A spokesman for Granada, makers of *Coronation Street*, said that its core audience consisted of middle-aged people — exactly that targeted by *Antiques Roadshow*. "*Antiques Roadshow* starts 15 minutes earlier than *Coronation Street* on a Sunday so people are already hooked by that by the time we start."

Mr Jackson was speaking at the launch of the BBC's winter schedule, which includes a £5.5 million production of *Ivanhoe*. Sir Walter Scott's novel set among the knights of the Crusades in medieval England. It stars Christopher Lee, Steven Waddington and Ciaran Hinds. *Ivanhoe* was a hit in the 1960s for ITV, when it starred Roger Moore.

The BBC will also be re-

running the 1960s sitcom, *Till Death Us Do Part*, featuring the foul-mouthed bigot Alf Garnett, played by Warren Mitchell. In his heyday, the outspoken Alf Garnett caused outrage by referring to black people as "coons" and to his son-in-law, Mike — played by Tony Booth, father of Cherie Booth, now the wife of Tony Blair, the Labour leader — as "a randy Scouse girl".

Mark Thompson, Controller of BBC2, said that it was unlikely to censor the programme, which formerly attracted audiences of up to 25 million, because viewers would understand that it exposed the bigotry behind Alf Garnett's views without endorsing them.

"It is indisputably one of the greatest comedies that the BBC has ever produced and the overwhelming majority of viewers will be happy to see it back again," he said.

Another period piece, Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*, will

be adapted for television for the first time, starring Colin Firth, Albert Finney and Claudia Cardinale, on BBC2. Modern drama in the BBC schedule includes a new prison serial, *Insiders*, written by Lucy Gannon, the creator of *Peak Practice*, *Soldier Soldier* and *Bramwell* for ITV.

Michael French, who until recently played David Wicks in *EastEnders*, has a new role as a time-travelling detective in *The Crime Traveller*, and Sinead Cusack and Miles Anderson star in a modern marriage series, *Have Your Cake*.

Factual programmes on BBC1 include *Children's Hospital*, a look inside the casualty unit at the Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool. *EastEnders* star Wendy Richard presents *The Big C*, a programme about cancer, a year after diagnosis of her own breast cancer.

Television listings, page 43



Steven Waddington stars in *Ivanhoe*, an adaptation of Sir Walter Scott's novel of medieval England, which is one of the highlights of the BBC's winter schedule

Daughter to boycott premiere of film

By DALYA ALBERG

THE sister of an Australian pianist whose life story is the subject of an award-winning film has refused to attend tomorrow's European premiere in London because she feels the movie is an insult to the memory of their father.

Margaret Helfgott has expressed outrage over "myths and inaccuracies" in a film about her brother David that portrays her father Peter, a survivor of the Holocaust, as dictatorial and smothering them with love. She complained to Australian newspapers about "imaginary scenarios" in the film. Beatings, it suggests, drove the son to a nervous breakdown. She is also said to object to an actor with a German accent being cast as her father.

Shine, tipped for an Oscar and featuring Sir John Gielgud, opens in Britain next month. The director, Scott Hicks, insisted that his research, which included talking to David Helfgott, had been meticulous.

Dracula and Co repay stake in gothic horror

By ALAN HAMILTON

IN THESE days of *The X-Files* the Victorian Gothic ghost story may no longer have the power to terrify, but it still commands the power of money. A collection of 2,000 tales of mystery and imagination, many by the most obscure of authors, were sold at Sotheby's yesterday for £23,000, more than twice the auctioneer's estimate.

The top price of £7,820 was paid for a pristine 1851 first edition of *Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery* by J. Sheridan Le Fanu, not an author whose name is much bandied about Hampstead dinner party tables these days. By comparison, a first edition of Bram Stoker's much better known *Dracula* went for £3,910, while a particularly rare first edition of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Mysteries and Adventures* published in 1899 made a disappointing £1,650.

Sotheby's book experts said last night that the collection was the finest of its kind to come to market within memory. There were no regrets, however, for the seller, Andrew Stevens, a Devon solicitor who assembled a huge library of ghost and mystery stories over 35 years and who, despite the disposal of his

2,000 best volumes yesterday, still has 4,000 left. He picked them up for a song at charity shops and street markets over 35 years.

One of his best buys was an 1886 first edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, in its original paper cover, which he bought for one shilling (5p) from a bookshop in Wales. It went for £980.

"I am approaching retirement and I always saw my collection as a kind of pension," Mr Stevens said last night. "Besides, being custodian of so many books is a bit of a lie." He confessed himself staggered at the prices, especially as he had bought the top lot, the £7,820 Le Fanu, at auction less than 20 years ago for a couple of hundred pounds.

"I read a great deal as a boy and I began to collect the sort of books I liked reading. To the average reader, many of them will be extremely obscure but they are well known to enthusiasts of Gothic literature, of whom there are more than you might think," Mr Stevens said.

"I have never been on holiday without finding books to add to my collection," he said. "I should think I've bought books in every county in England and Wales — some from ordinary book-sellers but hundreds from market stalls and charity shops."

Peter Selley, Sotheby's English literature expert, said that the excellent condition of the books had boosted interest. He added: "The Gothic field attracts a great many collectors and prices are going up. There has been a whole re-evaluation of the Gothic novel in academic circles, partly because it often deals with the currently fashionable topics of gender, feminism and sexuality."



Dracula: the legend has lost none of its bite

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Lincoln dean says he will resign if the money is right

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Dean of Lincoln announced yesterday that he was willing to resign from the city's embattled cathedral. The Very Rev Brandon Jackson said that his lawyers were negotiating with the legal team at Lambeth Palace, the London home of the Archbishop of Canterbury.



Jackson: said bishop was the real problem

Earlier this year, Dr George Carey asked Dr Jackson and Canon Rex Davis, the Sub-Dean, to resign. The Dean said that he would resign only if Canon Davis went too. He now says that he is prepared to relinquish his freehold position unilaterally and that negotiations between lawyers have been taking place for some time. Canon Davis said he saw no reason to go.

The two men were speaking after the Bishop of Lincoln, the Right Rev Robert Hardy, announced he would boycott Christmas services at the cathedral in protest at their failure to resolve the long-running dispute. Dr Jackson

said that his departure depended on Dr Carey fulfilling his promise to preserve his "dignity and honour" and to ensure that he was not financially disadvantaged. "If the Archbishop wishes on his promise then I will be happy to stay until I'm 70," said Dr Jackson, who is 62.

The dispute has its origins in a loss-making exhibition of

the cathedral's Magna Carta in Australia in 1988, organised by Canon Davis. Dr Jackson was appointed the following year. He was cleared by a consistory court last year of sexual misconduct with a former cathedral verger.

Dr Jackson said: "I am not the centre of the dispute. The bishop is. And he has failed for over seven years now to exercise his authority properly." A spokesman for the bishop said Dr Brandon "is continually saying he's going but he will never tell us when. And his perpetual attack upon the bishop is something which upsets the whole diocese."

A married clergyman is to be examined at a church court over allegations that he had affairs with several parishioners. The Rev Clifford Williams, 48, a Church in Wales rector of Benlech, Anglesey, denies the claims, made in a Sunday newspaper.

Letters, page 17



Stacy Carter-Brooks, 10, had two missing fingers replaced by the second toe from each foot

Transplanted toes help children to get a grip on life

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

TOES make an excellent substitute when transplanted on to the hands of children without fingers, a surgeon's study has found. Walking is not affected and they are able to grip and grasp.

The survey was conducted by Shmuni Kay, of St James's University Hospital, Leeds, who has carried out more than 100 of the toe transfers. Mr Kay lost a finger in a childhood accident and was inspired by the efforts of a surgeon to save it for him. That operation did not succeed and he was left with only three fingers on his left hand.

His study of the first 40 operations, involving the transfer of 66 toes, has shown complete success, with all the toes working well. The children were able to grip paper and Lego blocks and to twist jar lids on and off.

The psychological benefits were also enormous, Mr Kay discovered, with the children less self-conscious about their hand and more willing to play with friends and take part in school activities. Once

in place, the toe grows and, to the casual eye, looks remarkably like a normal finger.

The second toe from either or both feet is removed during the operation, which takes up to eight hours. It is suitable for children born without fingers and for those who have lost them in accidents. The muscles and tendons that control the fingers are usually complete in the arm and ready to be connected to the new digit. A microscope is used during ultra-fine stitching of nerves and blood vessels.

Stacey Carter-Brooks, 10, from York, was born with two fingers of one hand missing. Her mother, Deoise Waddell, said: "We are very happy with the results of the operation."

"Before, Stacey always tended to hold one hand behind her back. She wouldn't play, she held back. Now nobody notices that two of her fingers are toe. The only problem is that she now has a very slim foot, so shoes tend to cost more."

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Psychological society

Parents who row 'likely to produce high achievers'

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

FAMILIES that argue frequently — or are "expressive", as psychologists prefer to put it — are likely to produce high achievers.

Research presented to the British Psychological Society's London conference yesterday showed that conflict within families, coupled with a strong sense of cohesion, produced offspring who are better prepared to deal with life's difficulties, regardless of the family structure in which they were raised.

Coming from a broken home was no bar to success in later life. The conventional ideal of the nuclear family was less important to child development than what went on between parents and children, whether there was one parent or two. Achieving cohesiveness within the family was helped by one parent being absent for part of childhood but was harmed if there were too many sons, the study found.

Tony Cassidy, a senior lecturer in psychology who carried out the research with colleagues at Nene College in Northampton, told the meeting: "We were looking at what makes children more resilient to stress. We found it is not related to the structure of the family — whether it's broken or not — but more to its cohesiveness."

Encouragement towards intellectual and cultural pursuits was one of the most important predictors of success in families. But this had to be coupled with freedom of expression and encouragement to debate and argue. Dr

Cassidy said: "More expressive families tend to produce children who are higher in mastery — that is, they see problems as challenges rather than as threats. Stress comes from seeing problems as threats rather than challenges. If expressiveness is not encouraged, the children will tend to be less resilient in the face of stress."

The researchers studied the family backgrounds of 169 young adults — selected from the Armed Forces, skilled non-manual workers and students — and assessed how well-motivated they were to achieve. They found that high achievers were more likely to come from families which had experienced conflict in the form of rows and disputes with parents or siblings.

If it provoked debate and a search for solutions, conflict could inspire children to respond positively to challenge.



Sweet solution to sticky problems

By JEREMY LAURANCE

WORKERS who chomp their way through chocolate bars and chewing gum to handle stress may have sniffed out two perfect calming foods to help them through their day.

A team of psychologists studying the effects of smells found that chocolate and spearmint had a powerful calming effect. Blindfolded volunteers were used to measure effects on theta brain waves, associated with levels of attention.

Neil Martin of the University of Middlesex, who presented the findings to the British Psychological Society's conference yesterday, said: "Chocolate generated less theta waves than any other smell."

Spearmint had a similar effect, but synthetic strawberry boosted attention, probably because it bore only a distant resemblance to the real thing and demanded concentration to identify it. Hot coffee had little effect.

The experiment was partly funded by the food industry. Dr Martin, senior lecturer in neuropsychology, said: "Chocolate and spearmint are very sweet and may remind people of certain

things that are relaxing. Or something could be tapping into a sub-cortical emotional centre."

A study of three psychics who have assisted police forces has found that they were less accurate than a group of psychology students. Researchers at the University of Hertfordshire presented the psychics with details and objects from Essex murder cases and asked if they had any insights.

Three students had the same information. Richard Wiseman said: "The students were bright and devised quite accurate answers. The psychics made ambiguous statements which they tried to twist when they were presented with answers."

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Popular schools 'should take space from neighbours'

By JOHN O'LEARY AND DAVID CHARTER

POPULAR schools should be allowed to open annexes in neighbouring schools which have empty places, the Audit Commission said yesterday in a report which sparked a row over the Government's claims to have expanded parental choice.

The commission said one in five parents failed to secure their first choice of school, while up to £100 million was being wasted on spare capacity. Popular schools were not expanding to meet demand because there were no incentives, but the use of neighbouring premises might help avoid "gridlock" in admissions.

Bob Chilton, Director of Local Government Studies at the commission, said: "Parents do not choose a school for its buildings: it is the learning experience they are after for their children. If other buildings could be found in the locality, it would be one way of promoting choice without incurring additional expenditure."

Research by the commission showed that class sizes were growing in popular schools because head teachers were required to take pupils up to a notional capacity, which was often larger than parents or teachers wanted.

At Coombe Hill Infants School, in Kingston upon Thames, for example, there were 210 pupils, compared with the official capacity of 168. The result was classes of



Squire: attacked report's 'simplistic conclusions'

winning government funding for new buildings at Bordesley Green.

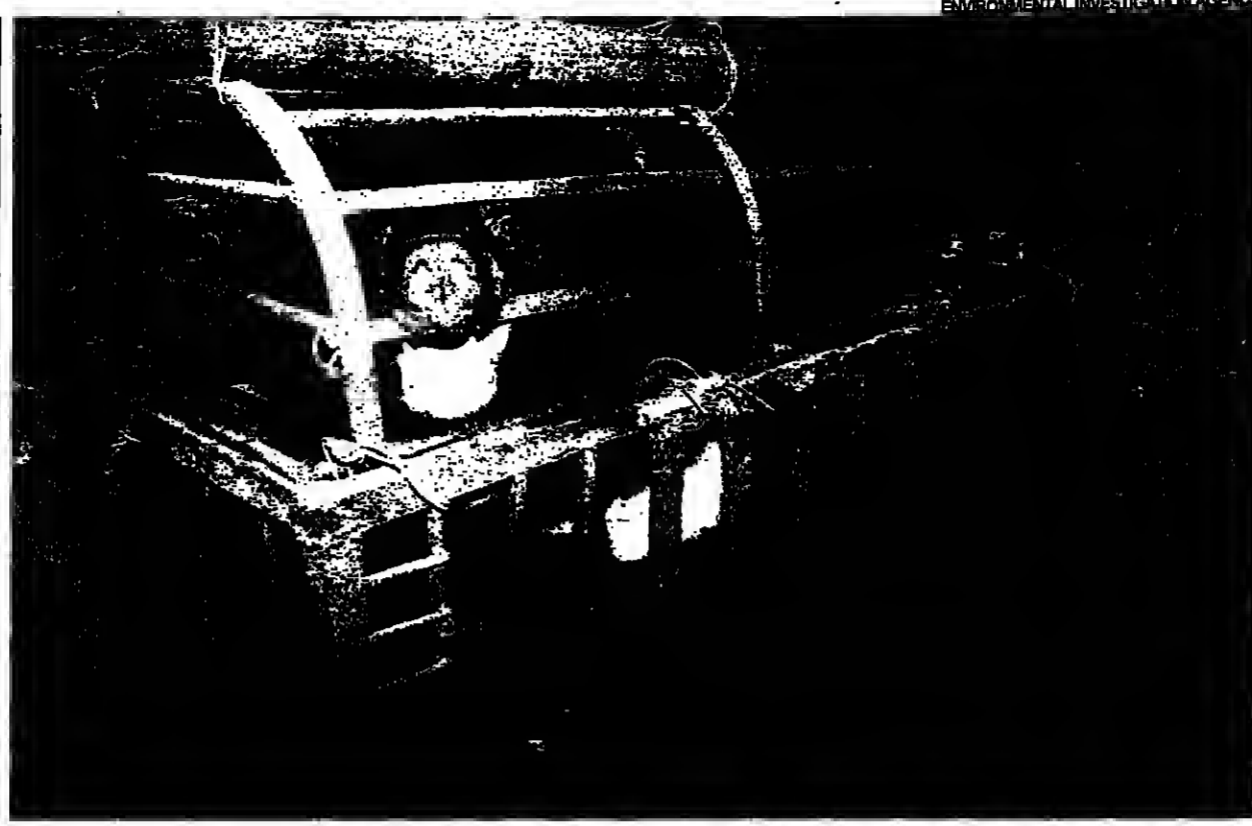
Abdul Malik, the chairman of governors, said the situation was a "nightmare" for parents in the predominantly Muslim community around the school. More than 70 families appeal against rejection every year but only two or three are successful.

Mr Malik added: "As chair of governors, parents try to lobby, request and beg me to do something because their child wants to be in the school. It is heart-breaking."

The commission's report found fault with both central and local government. "Inaction is not an option. Unwanted and unnecessary school places lock up scarce resources which could be used elsewhere."

Labour described the report as a "devastating indictment" of government policy. David Blunkett, the Shadow Education and Employment Secretary, said his party's proposals for local education plans, covering all state schools, were in line with the commission's recommendations.

Robin Squire, the Schools Minister, said: "It is a pity that the commission has devalued this research with some simplistic conclusions on the supply of school places and standards." He added that local authorities had all the necessary powers to manage the supply of school places.



Maddened by pain and frustration, a bear milked for the bile from its gall bladder bites its bars on a Chinese farm

Charity fights to free tortured bears from the milking farms of China

By DANIEL MCGRORY

THE rusted metal cage was so cramped, the bear could neither stand nor turn around. For hours, it would butt its head against the iron bars out of frustration and pain. Nearly starved and demented by confinement, the animal lay in its own filth, writhing in agony from the gaping septic wound on its back.

Thousands of bears are kept in conditions like these on farms in China and milked of the bile from the gall bladder, sold as a traditional cure. A steel catheter is jabbed into the bear's side and a plastic tube runs underneath the skin, protruding from the hole in its matted black fur. Every few days the bear is milked. The pain leaves the clamped animal moaning and clawing at its face. Often these animals are tethered by steel straps. After perhaps ten years of this treatment, they are left unable to walk.

Investigators working with Tusk Force's United States partner, the Global Survival Network, found that some of the cages had "crush" bars, designed to push the animals flat to the floor to make milking them easier. International protests have

Tusk Force Appeal

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the animals are slaughtered each year for their gall bladders in just one region of Russia. Cubs are left to die.

Bear paw soup, an Asian dish that costs up to £700 a bowl, is held to possess invigorating properties. In some restaurants in Asia, bears are boiled alive, after being beaten with sticks, "to ensure a good flow of fear juices".

Few Asian countries have specialised agencies investigating the illegal trade in wildlife. A bear gall, resembling a dried fig, is easy to hide and can be worth several thousand pounds. Herbal and synthesised alternatives to bear bile are available but there is little awareness of that in Asia.

Tusk Force and Global Survival Network are trying to educate Asia consumers and seeking better protection for bears and tougher enforcement of wildlife laws.

The West has its own lessons to learn: in North America, 40,000 bears are killed lawfully each year but the same number again is taken by poachers. The North American black bear is the source of most of the trade in bear parts for trophies but grizzly and polar bears are killed too.

Eight boys expelled over drugs

Eight boys have been expelled from a public school after admitting using drugs. Christopher Saunders, the headmaster of Lancing College, Sussex, said that a quantity of cannabis had been discovered. One pupil had been given money by the others to buy the drug and had made contact with a supplier.

Mr Saunders said: "These are the first expulsions for drugs in the school since 1981 and we shall continue to take an uncompromising stand."

Officers bailed

Six army officers charged with rape were released on bail by Judge Paul Clark at Oxford Crown Court. The six, serving with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, will appear before magistrates on January 8.

Eviction halted

A High Court judge overturned Wolverhampton Borough Council's eviction under new powers of two families of travellers from waste ground. Lord Justice Phillips said it had not considered the humanitarian implications.

Wheelchair crash

Police are seeking an elderly hit-and-run driver whose motorised wheelchair struck an 89-year-old woman on the seafront at Bridlington, East Yorkshire, leaving her with a badly gashed leg that needed 19 stitches.

Service cancelled

Relatives of British victims of the Lockerbie air disaster have decided against holding a memorial service in London for the first time in eight years. A wish not to deflect attention from the Dunblane massacre was one reason.

Mandelson gibe

Sixty Tory MPs have signed an early-day motion accusing Peter Mandelson, Labour's campaign strategist, of "incompetence in failing to rig" the BBC Today Personality of the Year poll in favour of Tony Blair.

Last post

Today is the last posting date for second class items.

Leah Betts jury discharged after failing to reach verdict

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

A JURY was discharged yesterday after failing to reach a verdict over a student accused of supplying Leah Betts with the Ecstasy tablet that killed her. A decision on whether to order a retrial will be made by the Crown Prosecution Service by the end of the week.

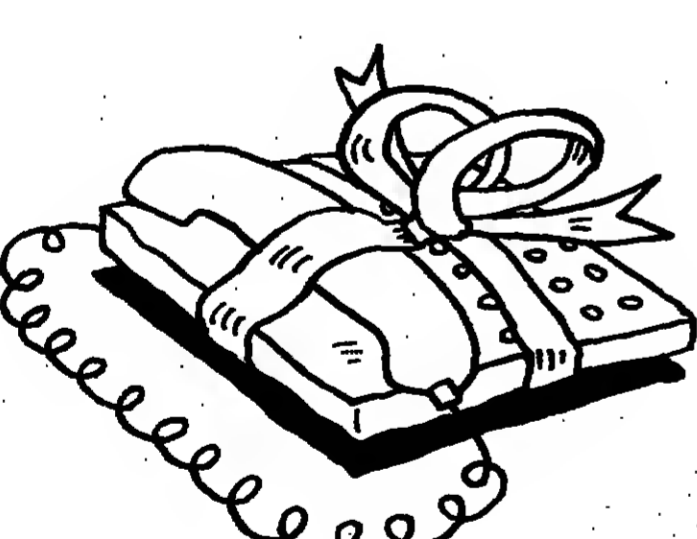
Steven Packman, 18, of Laindon, Essex, denied at

Norwich Crown Court any part in the supply of the class A drug to Miss Betts, who slipped into a coma at her eighteenth birthday party in November last year. His friend Stephen Smith, 19, from Basildon, Essex, has admitted being involved in the supply of the tablet and awaits sentence.

The jury, which began hearing evidence on December 10, failed to reach a verdict after

deliberations lasting nearly seven hours.

Paul Betts, Miss Betts's father and a former policeman, said: "My main feeling is frustration at the fact that the matter is not over and done with. We have got to go through it all again, provided the CPS decides to have a retrial. It's the closing of one chapter and the opening of another."



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British Ecological Society told that 94 per cent of flounders in Tyne show signs of feminisation

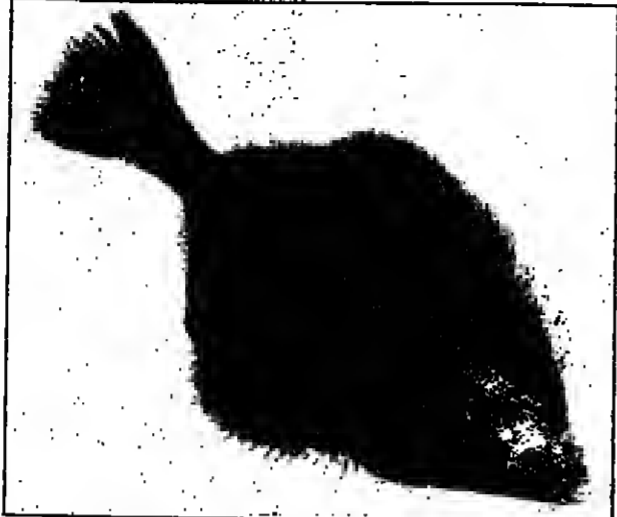
Sex changes in male fish are blamed on pollution

BY NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

FLOUNDERS living in the Tyne estuary are apparently changing sex because of industrial pollution, according to a new study of male fish which shows that 94 per cent have signs of feminisation.

Previous studies have shown that cages from sewage treatment works undergo sex changes, but yesterday's report is the first to show them in wild marine fish. The discovery, which will raise concern over the health of North Sea fish stocks, comes amid growing alarm over the effect on the environment of man-made chemicals.

Studies from around the world have identified nonylphenol as one of the chemicals associated with a fall in human sperm counts. The chemical, used in cleaning agents, glues and paints, appears to mimic the female hormone oestrogen or, in some cases,



Flounder: study found evidence of malformed testes, yolk proteins and enlarged livers in wild male fish

Feminisation was found in flounders up to 2 1/2 miles downstream of the nearest big treatment works at Howdon, which handles domestic and industrial waste.

Ms Lye, whose full findings will be published in the *Marine Pollution Bulletin* in January, said that water treatment works might be just one source of contamination, with the fish exposed to a range of pollutants discharged into the Tyne from other sources.

The research focused on flounders because they are bottom-feeding fish which migrate between the salty estuary and the North Sea and are considered reasonably resistant to pollution. Around 300 were caught and screened for sexual deformities and compared with 100 flounders from the less-polluted Solway Firth.

Up to 50 per cent of flounders in the Solway Firth were showing signs of sex changes, compared with a figure of 94 per cent on the Tyne. Significant levels of yolk protein, normally found only in fe-

A COMPLEX CHEMICAL EQUATION

Where do the oestrogen-like chemicals in the environment come from?
Thousands of chemicals could act like natural hormones. Attention has focused on nonylphenols (found in plastics, pesticides, agricultural products and car washes), phthalates (resins, plastics, dyes), and the breakdown of DDT. The contraceptive pill does not seem to be as important as naturally produced female hormones reaching rivers through sewage works.

Are the amounts of these chemicals building up?
Possibly. Many substances that get into rivers are washed out to sea, but others end up in sediments. These may be eaten by bottom-feeders, recycling the pollutants.

Is the problem worldwide?
Every developed country is likely to show similar effects. Most data on effects on wildlife has originated in the US. Recent clean-ups of rivers may have made the problem apparent. Previously, many rivers were too dirty for wildlife.

Can the chemicals be removed from water?
No existing water treatment works do so. Technology might be developed if major culprits were identified. Natural female hormones identified as a possible major problem by the Environment Agency are made more powerful by bacteria in sewage plants.

Are people at the same risk as wildlife?
Some scientists have linked falls in sperm counts, abnormalities in the testes and male infertility to the problem, but evidence is contradictory. No cause has been proved and some surveys show no decline in sperm count.

How can we reduce possible risks? Is bottled water safer?
If water was the only source, bottled water might be cleaner because it usually comes from deep springs. In practice, every kind of food is a potential source. Changing eating habits on existing evidence is not justified.

NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

New de-icer 'safer than rock salt'

BY NICK NUTTALL

SCIENTISTS have discovered an alternative to rock salt that de-ices roads without damaging the environment. Grating with salt is cheap but kills roadside trees and plants, as well as rotting cars and bridges. It can also harm freshwater streams and rivers.

The scientists from Bradford University have been studying calcium magnesium acetate. Trees sprayed with it are unharmed, and while some roadside plants appear to grow more slowly, none are killed. Alistair Headley, of the department of Environmental Sciences, said salt was being phased out in some parts of the United States.

The Highways Agency said it had been evaluating alternatives, including calcium magnesium acetate, but they had been dismissed on grounds of cost. Salt, which comes from mines in Cheshire, costs between £25 and £30 a tonne whereas the new chemical costs about £1,000 a tonne.

Injury ruling exposes rugby refs to liability

BY ADRIAN LEE

SPORTS officials could be liable for substantial damages after a referee was blamed yesterday for the appalling injuries suffered by a 17-year-old rugby player.

The Court of Appeal rejected as "unsustainable" an argument by the referee, Michael Nolan, that Ben Smoldon had consented to the risk of injury by voluntarily playing a highly physical game.

Mr Smoldon, who broke his neck when a scrum collapsed and is confined to a wheelchair for life, was awarded damages in the High Court in April against Mr Nolan, who had failed in his duty to the player. The damages have yet to be decided but yesterday's ruling clears the way for Mr Smoldon to receive an award of £1 million.

After the ruling, the Rugby Football Union said it expected its insurance premium to rise. All referees are automatically covered by public liability insurance, funded by the RFU. Since the High Court ruling, only a handful of amateur referees have told the RFU that they no longer wish to officiate.

Lord Bingham, sitting with Lord Justice Auld and Lord Justice Neill, said all rugby players should be insured against injury. But he said the court did not want to "open the door to a plethora of claims by players against referees and it would be deplorable if that

were the result". Lord Bingham said rugby was not a game for the timid or the fragile and all players must expect a "fair share of knocks, bruises, strains, abrasions and minor bony injuries". He said the match, between Sutton Coldfield and Burton-on-Trent Colts in October 1991, was very unusual as it had involved up to 24 collapsed scrummages. It was also difficult to prove that a referee was responsible for a specific injury. Neither Mr Nolan, 54, an Army cadet force administrator, of Tamworth, Staffordshire, nor Mr Smoldon, now 22, of Sutton Coldfield, were in court.

Mr Nolan's solicitors, Davies Arnold Cooper, said the referee was "saddened" by the court's decision. "The scope of potential liability for sporting officials has today been greatly extended. The courts have now made it clear they are prepared to review, in appropriate individual circumstances, the conduct of referees and any other officials concerned in the control of the game of rugby. In any active sport, injury might now subsequently lead to officials being liable for hundreds of thousands of pounds."

Mr Smoldon's father, Roger, said: "I only hope that Ben can now go on and live the rest of his life."

Law Report, page 30



Michael Nolan, left, failed to exercise reasonable care in a match, leaving Ben Smoldon, right, paralysed

Number is up for italic car plates

BY JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE Government is to clamp down on customised lettering on number plates because it cannot be read by speed cameras.

Registration letters and numbers in italics or in the style of a computer print-out will be banned under a new standard typeface, the British Department of Transport announced yesterday.

Although the existing rules specify the height of the characters and the width of their strokes, they do not cover the style, a loophole that has led to a rash of new styles.

Ministers have not yet decided to make the existing legal standard, as style letters and different colours are being considered.

The announcement came as

the Government inaugurated a four-month consultation on the future of the registration plate. The present system — an annual registration letter followed by three numbers and three letters — must be replaced by July 31, 2004. It is unpopular with the motor industry because the August rush for new registrations coincides with the holiday season.

Options being considered include a quarterly change of registration letter to even out sales, a change of registration every three or four years to make use of a greater combination of letters and numbers, a geographical indicator based on postcode or region, and a deregulated system allowing any mix of characters and numbers.

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Moscow fury as Columbus dethrones Tsar Peter



Zurab Tsereteli's statue of Peter the Great which is being erected on the banks of the Moskva river

IT IS vast, hugely expensive and in honour of a man who actively disliked Moscow. Furthermore, the critics of the monumental statue of Peter the Great being raised on the banks of the Moskva river say it is actually a recycled Christopher Columbus.

Members of the Moscow artistic intelligentsia staged a protest meeting last Sunday against Zurab Tsereteli and his latest 165ft statue. The protesters said that as much as \$50 million (£30 million) of city money has been wasted on the statue of a Tsar who rejected Moscow as his capital. The statue is being erected to mark the 300th anniversary of the Russian Navy in what is a landlocked city. The statue itself is not impressing Muscovites either.

"It is monstrous, I just don't have the words for it," said Yuri Nikolayev, an oil painter selling his pictures on the embankment in the shadow of the statue.

The final charge against Mr Tsereteli is the most unusual one: self-plagiarism. Four American cities rejected his plan for a 311ft statue of Columbus before the city of Columbus, Ohio, approved the idea. But they have not yet found the funding to start creating it.

Mr Tsereteli has denied that the statue is just an inverted image of his earlier design, but the similarities are striking. Columbus stands on a ship on top of a thick column, left arm raised, right arm resting on a ship's helm. Peter the Great is also standing on a ship on a column. Only it is his right arm that is lifted up, holding a scroll. His left hand is holding an eight-spoked ship's wheel identical to the one on the Columbus statue.

It is not the first time that Mr Tsereteli has been accused of recycling designs. A sculpture in bronze called *Tragedy of the People*, in memory of the victims of the Nazis, was commissioned for Moscow's war memorial park, Poklonnaya Gora (The Hill of Bows). It depicts the gradual disintegration of a man into a corpse. But Moscow newspapers alleged that the *Tragedy of the People* was a reworking of *The Tragedy of the Jewish People*, an

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL IN MOSCOW



Peter the Great, the Tsar who rejected Moscow as his capital



Columbus, who found America while seeking a route to India

Israeli commission that was later shelved. After a host of complaints the Russian version, which used up most of the bronze in the city's sculpture store, has been shipped to a less prominent location.

For the sculptors of the Moscow Artists Union, the Peter the Great statue was the last straw in a process they are calling "Tseretelisation". Under the patronage of Yuri Luzhkov, the Mayor of Moscow, and

his "cultural adviser", the folk singer Iosif Kobzon, Mr Tsereteli has already put up five major monuments in the capital.

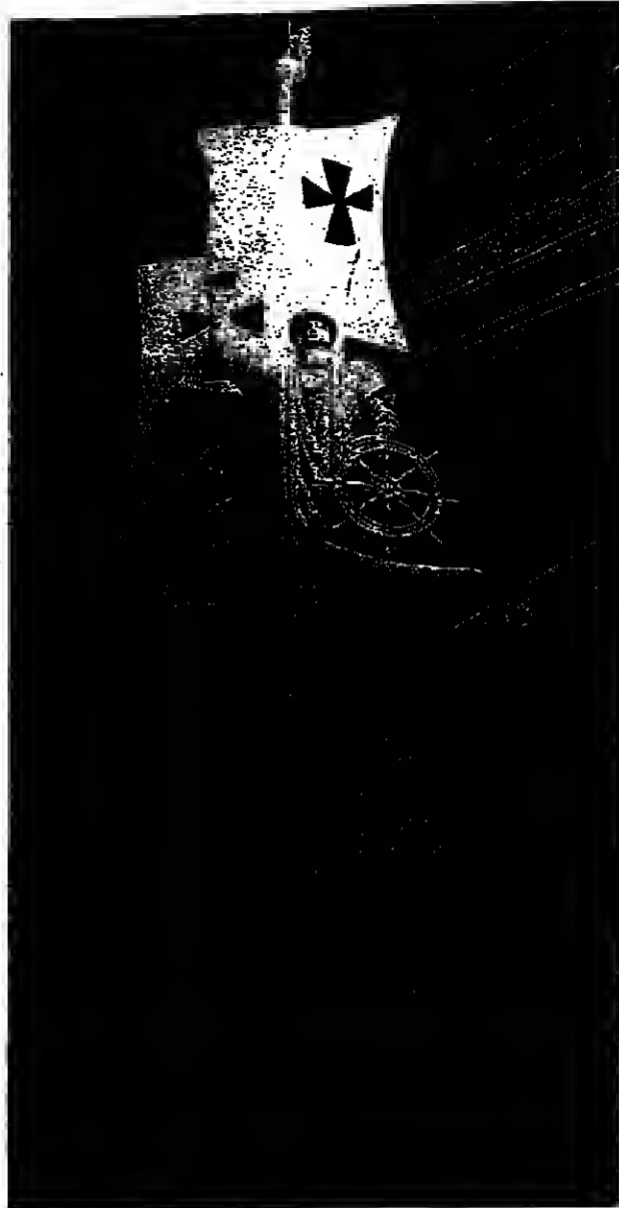
His largest monument to date, a war memorial called *St George and the Dragon*, is particularly controversial. It is supposed to be an angel perched on a sword, but has been unfavourably compared to a cockroach skewered on a pin. Alexander Solzhenitsyn recently joined the chorus of complaint and fulminated against Mr Tsereteli's "massive and third-rate monuments".

Igor Bondarenko, an architectural historian, said his main objection to the new statue was ethical not aesthetic. If it was not Mr Tsereteli, he said, they were capable of commissioning "someone even worse".

"I am depressed and annoyed by a system in which someone can take decisions like this without any consultation," said Mr Bondarenko. "Why should I be forced to look at this Columbus in a new guise when city money could be being spent in so many better ways?"

Mr Tsereteli first won fame 15 years ago with a statue celebrating the friendship of the Georgian and Russian peoples. A tall rectangle spilling out letters of the Georgian alphabet, it met with a puzzled but generally positive response in Moscow. His abstract style was greeted as a welcome change to the tradition of sombre, figurative statues of Soviet leaders. But ironically since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Mr Tsereteli has reverted to the more traditional style against which he used to react.

He is now consolidating his status as court artist. He and his patron, Mr Luzhkov, were recently awarded the Russian State Prize for Literature and the Arts by President Yeltsin. "My work is not yet finished, so it is too early to give any kind of evaluation," Mr Tsereteli said at the weekend. "It will be a new ensemble of worldwide importance, which is why the Moscow Government is attaching such huge importance to the project."



Columbus, commissioned by Columbus in Ohio, which critics say is a model for the Moscow work

nick Mobutu come with mis to prop up Za



Aid workers quit Chechnya over Red Cross deaths

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

WESTERN aid organisations yesterday ordered an emergency evacuation of their staff from Chechnya, after gunmen using silenced weapons murdered six Red Cross workers, five of them women, as they slept in their beds.

In one of the single most brutal incidents of the two-year separatist conflict, several suspected Chechen gunmen broke into a hospital in Noyve Atagi, 11 miles south of Grozny, and murdered the aid workers early yesterday.

Local residents came out to watch as colleagues of the victims loaded coffins onto a white lorry bearing the logo of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The hospital has treated 1,500 people since it opened in September.

No one claimed responsibility for the murders, and both the Chechen authorities and the Kremlin were quick to condemn the incident and emphasised that it should not be allowed to undermine their peace agreement.

Nevertheless, the attack did have the immediate effect of halting practically all foreign assistance to the region.

The ICRC described the incident as the single worst attack on its organisation in its 133-year history and ordered the immediate evacuation of its remaining staff from the war-torn republic. It named the victims as: Hans Elkerbout, a Dutch construction technician; Ingeborg Foss, a Norwegian nurse; Nancy Malloy, a Canadian medical administrator; Gunnhild Myklebust, a Norwegian nurse; Sheryl Thayer, a New Zealand nurse; and Fernanda Calado, a Spanish nurse.

News of the murders caused panic in the foreign aid community working in Chechnya. Merlin, the British medical charity, ordered the evacuation of its staff from the area. It has suspended its programme for one week while it considers whether or not to continue its operations. Médecins sans Frontières reportedly pulled out its staff from Chechnya earlier this year after a number of its employees were kidnapped by masked gunmen and only freed after ransom payments. Russian Kutayev, a Chechen official, said the killings were "an intentional and planned provocation aimed at foiling presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for January 27. It is widely suspected that hardline Chechens, opposed to the peace deal with Russia, may have targeted the Red Cross workers in an effort to destabilise the shaky agreement.

Daughter's role denied by Kremlin

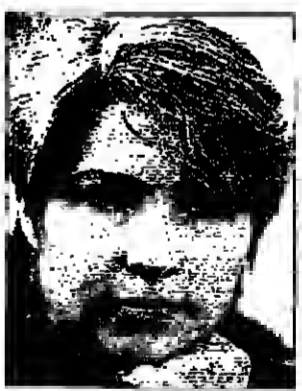
BY THOMAS DE WAAL

THE Kremlin denied a newspaper report yesterday that President Yeltsin's daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko, is going to be given the official status of presidential aide, a move that would appoint her formally in her role as the President's closest adviser.

The heavyweight daily newspaper *Segodnya* said Mrs Dyachenko would be given an official title before the month's end. Sergei Yastrzhembsky, Mr Yeltsin's press secretary, denied the report, but gave himself a let-out, saying only that there were "no documents confirming the appointment."

Mrs Dyachenko, 37, is credited with having been her father's chief image-maker during the summer election campaign. Since then she has stayed one of his closest political advisers and a close colleague of Anatoli Chubais, the Kremlin chief of staff.

A monthly poll of experts in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* to list Russia's "100 leading politicians" put Mrs Dyachenko tenth this month, ahead of the defence, interior and finance ministers. The *Opposidoo* dubs her part of an unaccountable clique running the Kremlin.



Dyachenko: top adviser

Russian intelligence service exposes 400 spies in two years

BY RICHARD BEESTON

IN THE past two years officers with Russia's counter-intelligence service have identified and put under surveillance about 400 foreign operatives and apprehended 39 locally recruited Russian spies, Nikolai Kovalyov, its head, said yesterday.

He added that Moscow was ready to overlook this year's damaging spy dispute with Britain, predicting that the two countries would continue to co-operate on intelligence.

Speaking at a Moscow press conference, Mr Kovalyov, who heads the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor to the KGB, said Russia was the target of numerous foreign spying networks. "Unfortunately, the forecast for the coming years does not suggest

that the activities of foreign special services will diminish," he said.

Among recent arrests, he highlighted that of Platon Obukhov, the junior Foreign Ministry official accused of spying for Britain. His arrest in April triggered the worst spy dispute since the Cold War, involving the expulsions of eight diplomats, four each from the embassies in Moscow and London.

"The British assumed the mode of communication they used was based on the latest technology, the latest achievements of science and technology, and they thought this was perfectly safe," said Mr Kovalyov, suggesting Britain had been lax in handling Mr Obukhov. "I do not think it will affect the relations be-

tween the two countries," he said. "In some ways the British special services have helped us a great deal."

He also accused the United States, Israel, Sweden, Turkey and the Baltic states of running intelligence-gathering operations in Russia, adding that a Russian working for an unnamed European state would be exposed soon.

Still based at the Lubyanka, the infamous home of the KGB, the FSB has lost much of its power over the past five years. Its inadequacies were exposed during the Chechen conflict, when it failed miserably to gather intelligence on separatists.

It is becoming increasingly active in areas such as fighting organised crime, corruption and terrorism.

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Sick Mobutu flies home with mission to prop up Zaire

FROM SAM KILEY, AFRICA CORRESPONDENT, IN NAIROBI AND BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

PRESIDENT MOBUTU of Zaire returned to Kinshasa yesterday after months of cancer treatment in Europe to confront his toughest political task — how to prevent the break-up of the vast country. Stepping off his chartered plane from Nice, the last of Africa's great dictators, who has amassed billions during his repressive 31-year rule, raised his hands in salute to 20,000 "supporters" in the crumbling capital. The 66-year-old leader was accompanied by a huge entourage of security guards, aides and family members. His flight was followed by a cargo plane carrying consumer goods such as French washing-machines, refrigerators, televisions, video recorders and other items purchased in a last-minute shopping spree by the Mobutu clan. Each of the consumer durables, making up the President's baggage, costs more

than the average Zairean's annual wage of £200. Many African observers were surprised that Mr Mobutu bothered to return. "He has salted away the best part of \$9 billion (£5.4 billion), he's dying, old, and has probably lost all credibility he had with his own people. Why he didn't stay where he was [in the south of France] and watch Zaire fall apart on satellite TV beats me," one Western ambassador in Nairobi said. But others believe only he can hold Zaire together as rebels in eastern Zaire have seized control of a swath of the country and routed his army. The rebels — the Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation, Congo-Zaire — under Western pressure have been offering ceasefire negotiations for the last ten days. So far Mr Mobutu has given few clues to his plans for tackling the Rwandan-backed rebel offensive in the east.

"Most Africans want to die at home, and he is dying. There are also signs that he has been wheeling and dealing behind the scenes, trying to send an envoy to meet with the rebels so that they can negotiate some sort of peace," another ambassador in Kigali, the Rwandan capital, said. Before leaving France, Mr Mobutu met many French politicians, African leaders and Raymond Chrétien, the United Nations envoy, but he has not said whether he hopes to negotiate an end to the rebellion or muster his demoralised troops for a counter-offensive. For the past five years Mr Mobutu has ruled a country the size of Western Europe with a mixture of well-timed chaos, to prevent his enemies from organising an effective opposition, followed by complete indifference. As a result, the mineral-rich provinces of Shaba and East and West Kasai have established a form of autonomy, and North and South Kivu are now under control of the rebels led by a veteran guerrilla leader, Laurent Kabila. They have vowed to march on Kinshasa. African leaders are worried that, if Zaire falls further into chaos, anarchy will spread to the nine nations bordering it; civil wars already rage in Burundi and Sudan. Mr Mobutu's first task may be to rein in his own administration before both the Government and Zaire collapse under a rebel onslaught. "This is the sort of challenge he might like. Perhaps he will rise to it," a veteran African diplomat said.



A woman tries to protect her belongings yesterday as she wades through the floodwaters in the southern Indian city of Madras. Thousands of homes were submerged, rice crops were damaged and more than 80 people were killed during heavy rains in Tamil Nadu state last week

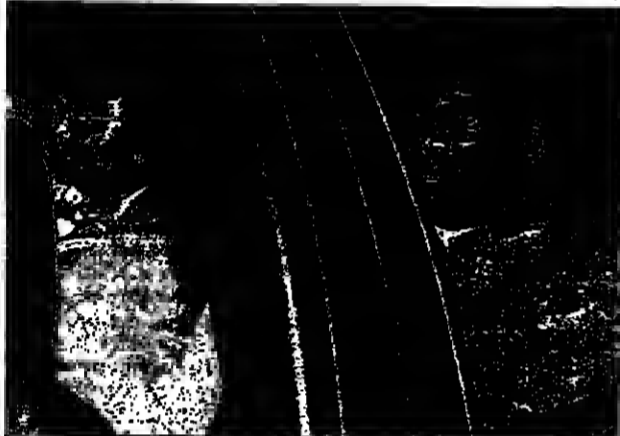
Peking's chosen chief tells Patten to face reality

TUNG CHEE-HWA, Hong Kong's Chief Executive-designate, yesterday urged the Governor, Chris Patten, to "face the reality" and help to establish a form of government for the future. "Too much argument has gone on over the provisional legislature," the 59-year-old shipping tycoon said in comments before flying to Peking for his formal appointment as the future leader of post-colonial Hong Kong. Mr Patten has denounced the provi-

sional legislature as unwarranted and says he will have nothing to do with it. Speaking to the Joint Chambers of Commerce, Mr Tung said the British and Hong Kong Governments were "wrong" for refusing to co-operate with Peking's handpicked Provisional Legislative Council which, on July 1 next year, will replace the present wholly elected Legislative Council

(LegCo). The new 60-member council will be chosen on Saturday. Both councils will operate at once and, obviously, in mutual opposition. Although the provisional council will not formally take office until July 1, its influence will be great if not decisive from the start. Nevertheless, Mr Patten has described it as "this echo chamber". Mr Tung has admitted that

there are doubts about its legality, but he said this will be resolved. Although Mr Tung was careful yesterday not to set any clear limits on free speech, he left no doubt what he would discourage. "Achieving our aims need not go through open confrontation or street demonstrations," he said in an oblique reference to Hong Kong democrats, who frequently take to the streets to protest against Chinese actions.



President Mobutu and his wife arrive at Nice airport from where they flew home to Kinshasa.

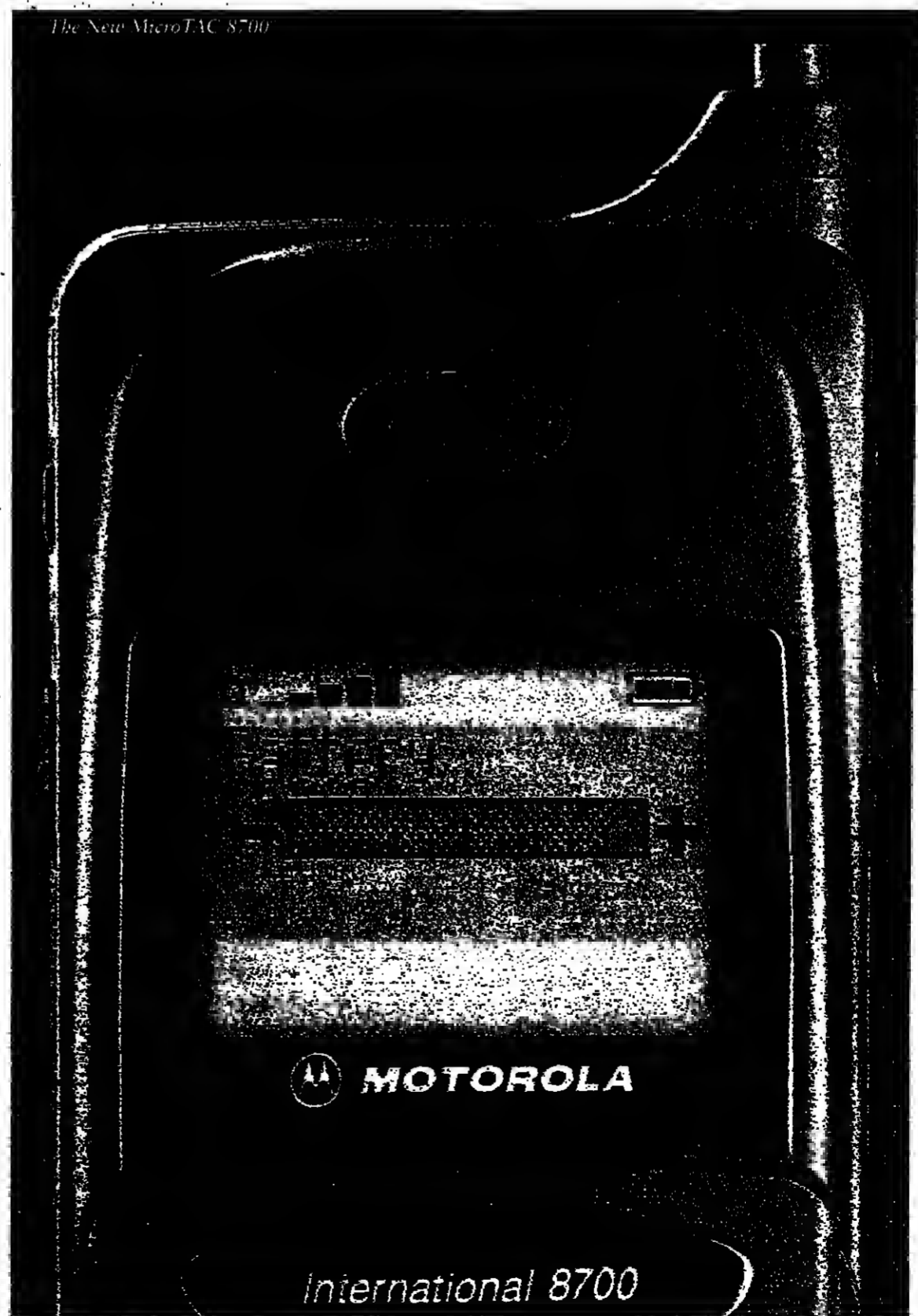
Israelis reject US criticism

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM
THE Israeli Government yesterday rejected criticism by President Clinton that its policy of Jewish settlements was an obstacle to peace. Binayamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, declined to comment but Yitzhak Mordechai, the Defence Minister, made it clear that his Government intended to expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, despite increased pressure from the United States not to do so. "The policy of this Government is to strengthen settlement in places where it exists," Mr Mordechai told reporters during a visit to the Gaza Strip. "There are natural needs and I believe this policy is clear and was explained to every national and international element. If there are disagreements, it is better for us to talk about them."

Australia uncorks wine's genetic code

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY
THE Australian wine industry, which already enjoys an enormous British following, is poised to further consolidate its worldwide reputation with the development of genetically enhanced vines. The breakthrough, announced by scientists in Adelaide yesterday, is expected to transform the country's wine and dried fruit industries by boosting — both productivity and quality. Australian researchers believe the genetically modified vines will produce superior grapes, enhanced flavour, improved colour development and increased disease resistance. The research team, funded by the Australian Government's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, has already produced 20 grape vines from single cells in a test tube environment, each containing a new introduced gene. Nigel Scott, the research team leader, revealed that they had managed to isolate the vine genes responsible for differing characteristics, such as colour and sugar accumula-

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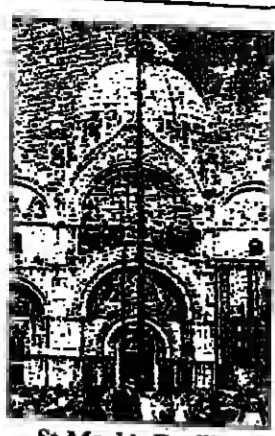
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Lion of St Mark is stolen from altar

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

ST MARK'S Basilica in Venice, once described by John Ruskin as a "treasure-house and confusion of delight", had one less treasure and a bit more confusion yesterday after the theft of an early 17th-century bronze lion.

The loss has symbolic importance for Venice, whose symbol is the Lion of St Mark, usually shown holding a book with the words, allegedly addressed to the evangelist by an angel who appeared to him in the lagoon: Pax tibi, Marce evangelista meus (Peace be with you, Mark, my evangelist).

Police said the lion, one of a pair at the foot of an altar in a side chapel, appeared to have been stolen early last Sunday morning. Its absence was not noticed until Sunday evening. Embarrassed officials at the Basilica confirmed the theft yesterday.

Some newspapers speculated that the lion - which was prized off its marble pedestal with a crowbar - was stolen during a Mass and that worshippers either did not notice or thought the thieves were workmen.

The bronze lions were cast in 1615 by Gabriele Orlandini. Police said their market value was "impossible to calculate". They suggested the lion had either been stolen for a private collector or that the thieves would demand a ransom for its return.

Juppé rushes into print to insist he is no monster

FROM BIEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

ALAIN JUPPÉ, France's desperately unpopular Prime Minister, laid bare his inner turmoil in a book published yesterday in which the unloved, thin-skinned Prime Minister declared: "I am not a monster."

M. Juppé's cri de coeur, entitled *Entre Nous* (Between Ourselves) and written in the space of just four afternoons, is a strange mixture of self-pity, self-deprecation and self-justification.

Early assessments of the slim volume ranged from "honest and uplifting" to "bizarre" and "cringeworthy".

In 116 pages of large print, M. Juppé, 51, laments the way he has been portrayed as an arrogant technocrat, pleads for affection and insists that beneath his cool exterior beats the heart of a passionate man.

"I am not a monster of indifference... I am less dry and armour-plated than the newspapers and drawing rooms reckon," he writes, noting that his political colleagues and journalists look at him "the way people look at a bullfight waiting for the bull to be killed".

"Like all men who take the front of stage, I need recognition, consideration, even affection," he proclaims. "I can make mistakes. I have already made mistakes."

One of these may have been the decision to write this book.



Juppé wrote 116-page book in four afternoons

which was condemned by the Socialist Opposition yesterday as "a media-narcissistic operation completely removed from France's problems... at the moment when French people are demanding that he think about them, Alain Juppé is preoccupied with himself."

Entre Nous, produced in deepest secrecy over the past six weeks, was apparently inspired by an unpleasant encounter in Bordeaux, where M. Juppé is Mayor. Strolling in the city, the Prime Minister noticed a "fashionable-looking couple" walking towards him.

"They look friendly. At the moment they pass, the woman starts leaping like a goat and shouting 'Die, you bloody idiot! Pretty passer-by, I wanted to reply to you,'" he writes.

"This is not a PR stunt, this is a cry from the heart," one of M. Juppé's advisers said, but it is clearly part of a concerted effort to give the ailing Government a more human face at a time of deep disillusionment.

"The French people grumble about change, and since I am the one trying to force this change, they find it a relief to blame me for their ills," the Prime Minister writes.

M. Juppé, nicknamed "the computer" for his number-crunching approach, said during a television interview on Monday night: "I would prefer to be loved than not to be loved, but I am not complaining. If I said I didn't care, people would say I was indifferent."

"It is the book of a man who has been wounded, a little unhappy and, at the same time, quite calm," M. Juppé writes, expressing his feelings.

Stepdaughter held: Sophie Daniou, the stepdaughter of Jacques Toubon, the French Justice Minister, was taken into custody yesterday by police investigating the near bankruptcy of a ski resort in the French Alps. (AFP)

Leading article, page 17



Prodi coalition at risk as IMF tells Italy to cut budget deficit by £5bn

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) yesterday warned the centre-left Government led by Professor Romano Prodi that it will have to shave a further £5 billion off Italy's huge public deficit "as soon as possible" if it hopes to qualify for the European single currency.

The proposed 1997 budget has already led to demonstrations, and commentators have predicted further public protests in the new year if a "supplementary budget" is introduced, posing a possible threat to the Prodi administration.

An IMF team visiting Rome said Italy would have to reform its bloated public sector and cut state support for pensions, welfare and health spending. The Government, which took office in May, has so far avoided cutting the welfare sector for

fear of alienating the hard Left, on whose votes it depends in the Lower House.

The centre-right Opposition, led by Silvio Berlusconi, said the IMF message, in an end-of-year report on the Italian economy, meant that the country was doomed to "stay outside Europe".

Signor Prodi said, however, that the general thrust of the report had approved the Government's handling of the economy and its attempts to reduce the deficit through a combination of spending cuts and tax increases, including a highly unpopular "Euro tax".

Yesterday the Government won a series of confidence votes in the Senate on its controversial budget, which aims to cut the deficit by \$40 billion (£24 billion), but the opposition parties boycotted the vote.

The Government has a comfortable majority in the Senate. The budget now returns to the Lower House for a final reading before the end of the year. Failure to pass it by December 31 would force the Government to introduce provisional measures which would risk undermining Italy's fiscal credibility.

Cesare Romiti, the outspoken and powerful head of Fiat, said Italy was "going through a tragic moment" in its history, with a ruling class deficient in personalities.

"Italians are beginning to realise they do not have even a crumb of hope for the future," he said. Signor Romiti added that the priority should be growth and job creation rather than a desperate attempt to qualify for European monetary union.

Signor Prodi also faced attacks from his own camp, with Massimo D'Alema, the leader of the former Communist Party of the Democratic Left (PDS), declaring at the weekend that the ruling coalition - of which the PDS is the main element - had lost sight of the reforming ideals with which it was formed.

"The challenge before us should be nothing less than the transformation of Italy," he said.

Signor Prodi came to power promising to govern for five years and draw a line under Italy's postwar history of fragile "revolving door" governments. Signor Berlusconi forecast earlier this month, however, that the Government would fall in the spring.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Nigerians sold as sex slaves

Brussels: Belgian police have smashed a major prostitution ring involving Nigerian girls brought into the country on forged papers and sold into sexual slavery. The ring also involved Italy, The Netherlands and Germany.

"We know that at least 200 girls passed through this ring," Gendarmerie Captain Bernard Libbrecht said yesterday. So far 12 people have been arrested. (Reuters)

Casinos to shut

Ankara: Tansu Ciller, the Turkish Deputy Prime Minister, ordered casinos to be shut as part of efforts by the Islamic-led coalition to curb gambling. She said: "Casinos make families suffer." (AP)

Burma threat

Bangkok: Burma's military Government said Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi is a traitor conspiring with the West and will be destroyed, said an article in the state-run press. (AP)

Fighting spreads

Mogadishu: The battle for the Somali capital widened when militiamen led by Ali Mahdi Mohamed joined the fighting, which has killed more than 1,350 people and wounded 900 in five days. (AFP)

Minister jailed

Seoul: Lee Yang Ho, the disgraced former South Korean Defence Minister sacked from the Cabinet in October, was jailed for four years on charges of bribery and leaking military secrets. (Reuters)

Guerrilla killed

Algiers: Algerian security forces shot dead Brahim Kadil, alias Kagalous, a Muslim guerrilla leader sought for more than 50 murders, the French-language daily *L'Authentique* said. (Reuters)

Suicide attack

Colombo: A Tamil Tiger suicide bomber killed a senior police commander near the eastern town of Karaitivu, police said. In a separate attack seven soldiers were killed by a landmine. (Reuters)

Diplomats join strikes over Greek budget

Athens: Thousands of public and private-sector workers, including diplomats, joined a strike yesterday in a final attempt to get the Greek Socialist Government to ease its 1997 budget - the tightest in 18 years (John Carr writes).

The General Confederation of Labour organised a mass rally at which people shouted anti-austerity slogans outside the gates of parliament as deputies took their seats for a five-day budget debate.

No surprises are expected in Saturday's vote, even though the Socialists led by Costas Simitis, the Prime Minister, have only a 12-seat majority. Merchant seamen - angry

over plans to scrap their generous tax privileges - tied up almost half the European Union's commercial fleets in a two-day walkout that began on Monday.

Diplomats are refusing to argue the country's political case abroad, because they are vexed that their entertainment allowances are to be cut.

Striking teachers are extending the school Christmas holiday by at least a week, demanding higher pay rises.

On top of that, Greece's farmers are in the twentieth day of a strike that has cost industry and business about £500 million.

Focus on Greece, page 31

Starter's orders for new Bosnia force

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

MORE than 30,000 troops, including Americans, British and Russians, were given their orders yesterday to begin Operation Joint Guard, the latest military peace mission for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Faced with another 18 months in Bosnia, the new Stabilisation Force (Sfor), which will also include troops from 17 non-Nato countries, will start officially from tomorrow, when the one-year mandate of the Implementation Force (Ifor) expires.

Yesterday Nato defence ministers approved the activation order for the new force at a meeting in Brussels. Walter Stolcombe, American Defence Under-Secretary for policy, said: "The force will continue to be heavily armed and it will have a full range of armory both to protect itself and, if necessary, to act decisively against violations of the Dayton peace accord that ended the 43-month war in Bosnia."

The new force has no new orders to track down and detain war criminals, despite pressure from The Netherlands and Canada for more powers to arrest those indicted for war crimes.

Earlier Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, gave a warning that the firefall in defence spending throughout the alliance could undermine its ability to act. He spoke out after a Nato defence review showed that the operation in Bosnia had suffered from inadequate intelligence due to lack of money.

Mr Portillo said European defence budgets had dropped to 1.9 per cent of GDP, with only 14 per cent had been spent on advanced equipment. This compared with American defence spending, equivalent to 3.6 per cent of GDP, with 26 per cent going on new weapons.

The row between America and France over command of Nato's southern forces in Naples remained unresolved. America has refused to cede command of the Naples command.

Belgrade President Milosevic yesterday met student protesters marching for democracy. It was the first time the Serbian leader has met protesters who have held four weeks of rallies since opposition victories in local polls were overturned. (AP)

Pilot 'given warning'

THE crew of the military aircraft that crashed near Dubrovnik on April 3 killing Ron Brown, the US Commerce Secretary, and 34 other people was warned by a Croatian pilot, who had just landed, to divert to Split because of appalling weather (Michael Evans writes).

The alert came as the US Air Force C-130A aircraft was descending on its approach to Dubrovnik's Cilipi airport. The plane crashed 125ft below the top of a 2,300ft mountain, about 1.7 miles to the left of the runway.

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New Lads lead fashionable pitch invasion

Sportswear has moved off the field and into the high street, says Grace Bradberry

SPORTSWEAR is no longer just for the sports field. In the past few years, it has made significant inroads into other areas of men's lives, and has become a huge part of the men's fashion market.

Saturday morning strolls down the high street, Sunday lunches in the pub, and the occasional long walk can now all be undertaken without embarrassment in gear that could easily see you through the entire football season. You don't even have to be fit to get away with it, although it helps to be broad-shouldered.

The rise of the New Lad, with his predilection for "bloke's clothing" has boosted the trend. Television programmes such as *Fantasy Football League*, presented by Nick Skilner and David Baddiel, and *They Think It's All Over* have also been influential. Spectator sports are now cool, and you need to have the gear. Should you make occasional forays on to the football field, then so much the better.

But once high fashion gets hold of a trend, it can transmute it into something you wouldn't feel happy wearing on the terraces. At one end of the spectrum, there's the sort of sportswear that doubles as clubwear. At the other, there's "blokey" sportswear — comfortable, unpretentious, suitable for the rugby club. This is where Timberland comes in. The company has already established itself as a favourite for boots. Men like them. They're fashionable without being trendy, and they're eminently practical.

Now the American com-

pany has launched "Timberland Sports Series" in Britain, a collection designed to bridge the gap between the company's heavy-duty range, designed to withstand wilderness treks, and its straightforward sports-orientated clothing.

The principle behind it is guaranteed to appeal to the sort of men who recoil at an unnecessary lapel or an over-shaped shirt. What men really want, say the executives at Timberland, are not tight



Spectator sports are cool



Clothes with bloke appeal

neon T-shirts and jagged patterns, but generously cut, durable clothes in strong colours. They've been designed with tennis, après-ski and the gym in mind. They're also very comfortable for slumping on the sofa.

The clothes are modelled here by Greg and Jonathan Searle, the brothers who rowed for Britain at the last two Olympic games, winning gold in Barcelona and bronze in Atlanta.

The range is priced from £25 for a T-shirt to £200 for a waterproof jacket. Jersey shorts are £40, rugby tops, £50, and polo shirts, £60.

Photographer: RYAN SULLIVAN
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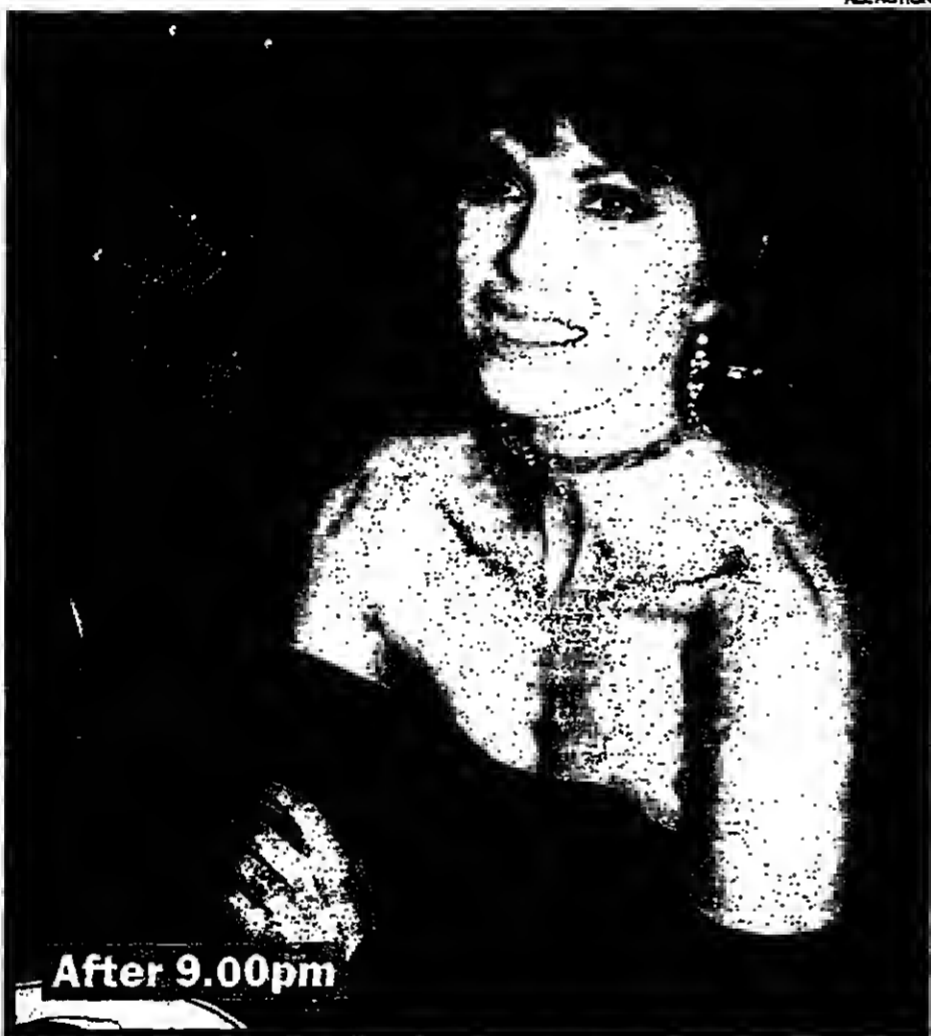
How bare do you dare?



After 7.00pm



After 8.00pm



After 9.00pm



After 10.00pm

Following the basic code of breasts under wraps until the clock strikes eight are top, Helena Bonham Carter, left, and Linda Evangelista; bottom, Joanna Lumley, left, and Caprice

Never has the gap been wider between what most women dare to wear at parties, and what is officially chic. Designers have gone mad for diaphanous this season, and fashion groupies baring all have been making a peculiar spectacle of themselves at otherwise decorous events.

Whatever you do, don't be tempted to join them, unless you have ambitions to be a designer's muse — in which case the more outrageous the better. Sane, intelligent women are still very careful about what they reveal at parties. Glance around any society event, and you can spot the new arrivals quite easily. They're the ones trussed up in jackets or cardigans, their eyes flitting nervously round the gathering, lighting on exposed breasts or high necklines.

Once they establish that there is plenty of uncovered flesh about the place, the cardies come off, and the wraps are allowed to fall away from the breasts.

If there's a run of parties, starting with six o'clock cocktails, and moving on via a party to a late dinner, then the anxiety is still more acute. Baring the back at 7pm could be construed as vulgar. But failure to bare it at 9pm could give an impression of frumpiness. If the hosts have gone to a lot of trouble to create high-octane glamour, then you let them down at your peril.

So what degree of nakedness is acceptable, and at what time? To avoid making the flesh check every time you enter a room, the basic code is as follows: at lunch, everything must be

How much nakedness is acceptable and what can be shown when is the dilemma of the season. *The Times* Style Editor steers the best course between vulgar and frumpy

covered. At six o'clock drinks, the skirt rises and the tights become sheer. After seven it's time to reveal the arms. The breasts, however, remain under wraps until eight. As the night goes on, the décolletage reveals itself in its full glory.

Current fashion lore, however, flies in the face of this rule. Designers are in love with see-through dresses, visible panty lines, and enormous holes where holes shouldn't be. Even supermodels can't wear it. In the latest issue of *Vogue*, Stella Tennant models a turquoise bra from Agent Provocateur, but confesses: "I bought it to wear underneath a see-through dress but I realised pretty quickly that you can't wear those kinds of things in real life."

Not everyone takes such a sensible view. Last weekend, Liz Hurley attended a screening of her film, *Samson and Delilah*, wearing a black Ungaro dress that was not only backless but also transparent. "You could see her bottom



Grace Bradberry

right through it," remarked one observer. Even Miss Hurley, who seems to relish this kind of scrutiny, finally took cover beneath Hugh Grant's jacket.

"As far as I can see, you can go stark naked now," reflects Ewa Lewis, social editor of *Tatler*. "Older women in particular do seem to think bare flesh, whatever the state, is attractive to men. Essentially, however, if it looks good, then there's no code."

So while most of us adhere to a conservative convention, it can be astonishing what the beautiful people will get up to. "I've been to lunches where people have been quite dressy and boobs have been shown," says the society fixer Liz Brewer. "Last year we all wore our jackets with an uplift bra and slight cleavage."

Many people, it seems, operate a sliding scale. "To show serious flesh you're looking at nine o'clock, when everyone's sufficiently hazed

over," says Amanda Craig, author of *Vicious Circle*, a novel full of media parties.

"Someone gave me an Yves Saint Laurent white shirt, with slits almost to the armpits," says Jilly Cooper. "It's got a high neck and you can gradually undo the buttons as you go on. By dinner it's practically down to the navel."

In certain circles, however, it is chic to be over (which means under) dressed in the early evening — it indicates that you are due to appear somewhere grander. "Nowadays people are very understanding," says Ewa Lewis. "If you're going to a drinks party, then a grand ball, you'd go to the first party in a ball gown."

Generally, this means sleeveless, and sometimes backless. Camilla Lighthart, social editor of *Tatler*, who runs the party planners Fait Accompli, reflects that it wasn't always like this. "In winter, it always used to be the thing to wear dresses with sleeves. But that has changed. You do see people in transparent blouses over bras, and it seems in some staggering way to be sort of acceptable."

Acceptable, perhaps, but rarely attractive. You can't blame designers for indulging in experiments. But don't suppose that every time they attempt to subvert conventional ideas of beauty they carry the entire population with them. For the foreseeable future, a flash of stocking or a glimmering collar-bone will continue to hold more allure than a visible panty line, or a drooping turquoise bra.

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Peace and contemplation: a woman "must be still as the axis of a wheel in the midst of her activities... a pioneer in achieving this stillness"

Are women deeper thinkers than men?

When Aung San Suu Kyi, banned leader of Burma's Opposition party, gave the opening address in Peking last year at the international women's conference, her audience expected a stirring call for democracy or women's rights. Instead they heard a long and thoughtful speech about the nature of tolerance, the meaning of learning, and the difference between people who are capable of learning and those who are not; she thought it was a more important distinction than the difference between good and evil. Her speech was as much a philosophical treatise as a political address, centring as it did on the feminine qualities of tolerance, compassion — and the ability to learn. "I am not talking of learning in the narrow sense of acquiring an academic education," she explained, "but of learning as the process of absorbing those lessons of life that enable us to increase peace and happiness

A new book which looks at the spiritual life of women reveals some profound differences between the sexes, says Magnus Linklater

in our world." Her long years of enforced solitude under house arrest had given her time and food for thought, she said, and her conclusion was that women, with their traditional role as mothers and as teachers of their own children, were far better equipped to listen and to learn than men. It was time they turned what was too often a passive virtue into a positive asset for society. Daw Suu Kyi was not voicing an entirely new idea. Writing 40 years earlier, Arne Morrow Lindbergh, wife of the aviator Charles Lindbergh, suggested that women had a greater capacity for contemplation than men. They turned inward for strength in a way that men who were so often caught up in the affairs

of the outward world, rarely did. A woman, she wrote, "must be still as the axis of a wheel in the midst of her activities; she must be the pioneer in achieving this stillness, not only for her own salvation, but for the salvation of family life, of society, perhaps even of our civilisation". To accept that there are inherent differences between the minds of men and women is to venture into dangerous territory. It mirrors the same prejudices that have conditioned social attitudes to women down the centuries — and still exist today. They are the attitudes that programme girls into accepting a different set of expectations and a different status from boys. "Real women in the real world are continually conditioned," wrote Germaine Greer in *The Female Eunuch*. "Because the difference is so wholeheartedly believed in, it is also experienced." At its extreme, it may be the unforgiving view of Pythagoras: "There is a good principle which created order, light and man, and an evil principle which created chaos, darkness and women." It can justify the repressive attitudes of fundamentalist religions, and even in its mildest form it may influence the form teachers who automatically assigns the girls to "environmental studies" and the boys to engineering.

A new book which looks at the spiritual life of women down the ages sidesteps this male/female argument, and instead explores the way women have dealt with their inner life. In doing so, it reveals some profound differences in their approach. Women, it suggests, often

occasionally into a realisation of what lies behind "the cotton wool of daily life". She talked of the pleasure she got from piecing together an explanation of these moments of shock: "From this I reach what I might call a philosophy... that we are parts of the work of art. *Hamlet* or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass we call the world. "But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself." Some themes emerge — emotion as inseparable from thought, for instance. George Sand wrote: "The best visible effects emerge only from emotion, and emotion comes only from conviction. No one is ever loved by something he doesn't ardently believe in."

Simone Weil said: "A poem is beautiful to the precise degree in which the attention whilst it was being composed has been turned towards the inexpressible." And Isadora Duncan expressed the same thoughts about her own passion in life — dance: "I believe that in each life there is an upward curve, and all that adheres to and strengthens this line is our real life — the rest is but as chaff falling from us as our souls progress."

One subject, however, is notable for its scarcity — men. In an age obsessed by "relationships" it may come as something of a shock to find that women consider there may occasionally be more interesting things to explore than the opposite sex. Love, of course, makes regular appearances, but mainly as a route to higher things.

So when Henriette d'Angleville, a French mountaineer, writes, "My heart beat furiously, my breathing was impeded, and deep sighs burst from my breast," she is actually talking about her first sight of the top of Mont Blanc. Whether this book reveals women as deeper thinkers than men, or simply that they take more interest in the affairs of the soul is less relevant than the light it sheds on a dimension of their lives we do not hear much about. Perhaps it is simply, as Germaine Greer once wrote, part of the "continuing dialogue between the wandering woman and the world". *The Virgo Book of Spirituality*, edited by Sarah Anderson (Virago Press, £16.99)



Virginia Woolf

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Compliments to our chefs may be premature

The proof of the British pudding

It is, as Marco Pierre White says, very flattering. It would be unnatural not to be a bit pleased when the president of the Epicurean World Master Chefs' Society, and a Frenchman to boot, has apparently hailed Britain as the gastronomic centre of the world. And this isn't a compliment from just anyone, you know. Monsieur le President is an eminent chef, one Jean Conil, who served his apprenticeship with Auguste Escoffier. It's rather like having a person who did a training analysis with Freud praising someone's psychoanalytic technique. But I can't imagine these words have made M Conil exactly a hero in his own country, where French culinary supremacy is an article of faith. It's not as if he was happy to leave it at praising the Brits — he came, too, to bory the French. We have people like Marco Pierre White and Gary Rhodes to thank for our new-found culinary eminence. M Conil concludes, whereas "French chefs are finished". I wrote in this paper some weeks ago about the demise of good food in France, so I can see what M Conil is getting at. And, up to a point, I agree. But he wildly exaggerates. Even Marco Pierre White appears embarrassed by the exuberance of this official flattery. Not someone known for his modesty (nor should he be, someone with that talent) he has responded honestly. "I don't believe we serve the best food in the world," he said (he's right, we don't), adding that nice though it may be to be praised and recognised "we do have to be realistic". The thing is, I'm not sure anyone wants us to be realistic. It's not enough that we have to have the best pop stars and the best models, we now live in a fantasy world in which we have the best food. The reality is rather different. Of course things are immeasurably better than they once were — 40 years ago people had to go to Timothy Whites for olive oil and to Soho for pasta — but just because we now have Sainsbury's Special Selection and a whole battery of superchefs doesn't mean we're living in "gastroheaven". We continue to trumpet our own gastronomic ascendancy. In the first instance, we confuse London with Britain. It is now relatively easy to eat well in London, but — and I don't care whom it offends — it is virtually impossible to eat well out of it. Restaurants are the most obvious area of difference. Good restaurants in the country tend to be of the squirry-scripted, country-house variety, boasting a menu stuffed with too many adjectives and too many ingredients elsewhere it can be all but incredible. I am not saying you can never eat well outside London, of course you can; and to show my regionally correct sincerity I declare I'm desperate to visit Niek Nairn's Braeval in the back of the Hebrides beyond. Generally, however, culinary prospects are dismal out of central London. (I once tried to get a cheese sandwich in Somerset. There I was, driving around the county where cheddar is made and all I could get were damp squares of pappy white bread smeared with margarine and tasteless plastic cheese.) This first, pre-eminent, confusion leads me to the second. We confuse the particular few with the general many. That is to say,

because we have, as M Conil remarks, Marco Pierre White and Gary Rhodes (I'd throw in Gordon Ramsay and Alistair Little while we are counting home-grown big names, and there are a few more too) we presume the general level of cooking in this country to be higher than it is. It is undoubtedly the case that we have very many good restaurants and that there is a growing number of homes in which food and cooking are reckoned important, but it is just as true that we consume an ever-increasing number of microwave meals and dinners bought from the chill-cook cabinet. I don't doubt it that there is an enormous interest in food now in this country. What I question is how much of society this interest permeates or, indeed, how far, culinarily speaking, this interest takes us. You don't measure a nation's culinary health by judging its professional kitchens, but by looking at how ordinary people eat at home. France may have earned its gastronomic reputation by its Michelin-starred restaurants, but the heart of its cuisine is learnt at Maman's, or Grandmaman's, or Grandmaman's knee.



Nigella Lawson

And if there is a decline in restaurants in France it is not so much, as M Conil sadly declares, that the great chefs can't afford the ingredients that would do justice to their talents (we do know, after all, about bad workmen and so forth) but that sons and daughters won't work for nothing in their parents' restaurants any more, so those cheap but extraordinarily good family establishments are going by the board. It is that culture that is dying out. Food and cooking have improved here, but it is still the case that the produce is very much better in, say, France or Italy. I am not talking about luxury comestibles (everything is available everywhere now) but about everyday fruit and veg. What is more, people are not really prepared to pay for food to be better. I'm not talking about people who can't afford more, but those who could. When I interviewed that passionate fishmonger Steve Hart some years back, he told me that so much of our best fish went abroad because no one here would pay what it costs in the shops. And all the time, independent butchers are going out of business because people would rather buy plastic-wrapped, fat-trimmed, tasteless meat from the supermarket. Good produce isn't cheap — but you can't eat well unless you get good raw ingredients and that is the end of it.

Having read M Conil's comments a little more closely, I see that money is, in some part, the motivation behind them, too. It is so hard to make a living out of cooking well that it is hardly surprising if most chefs are obsessed with making money, when so few of them ever will. Anton Mosimann once wrote movingly of his horror at the widow of a great chef having to sell his knives to survive. So it is to be expected that M Conil's real admiration lies in the entrepreneurial flair of the British chef. He notes how many make money and, more, how many become millionaires. I don't want to be a party-pooper and praise is of course gratifying, but we should not allow ourselves to be patronised into a state of such unjustified complacency.

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OBITUARIES

QUENTIN BELL

Quentin Bell, artist and author, died on December 16 aged 86. He was born on August 19, 1910.

The second son of Clive and Vanessa Bell, Quentin Bell was born into the heart of the Bloomsbury Group. In the year of his birth Roger Fry, his mother's intimate friend, was championing the first Post-Impressionist exhibition.

Quentin Claudian Stephen Bell was brought up in Gordon Square in Bloomsbury and in Sussex. In 1916 Vanessa Bell took a lease on Charleston Farmhouse, near Fife. At first it was used for family holidays but later it became a permanent home.

At Charleston she established a stable, if unorthodox, household, shared with fellow-painter Duncan Grant (the father of Bell's sister Angelica) and, at different times, other members of the Bloomsbury Group and Grant's homosexual lovers. With his elder brother, Bell as a child produced a family newspaper, the Charleston Bulletin, which charted domestic events; Virginia Woolf contributed.

He was educated at Peterborough Lodge, a preparatory school at Swiss Cottage, to which he went as a day boy from 46 Gordon Square, and at the Quakers' Leighton Park, after which he studied painting in Paris and Rome.

By the early 1930s he was an active Labour supporter and an equally active disrupter of Fascist rallies, in which he was aided by his considerable height and bulk. His aunt Virginia described him as a young man as being "very burly and male", and like a red and white sheep dog. She thought he had "all Nessa's sense, and Clive's shrewdness". His eyes were very blue, and his red-gold hair, according to an elderly Duckworth relation, like "a bed of Zinnias" (in his old age, less burly and with a full white beard, he looked like a clever, kindly Father Christmas).

In 1933 Bell suffered from a tubercular infection which necessitated a convalescence in Switzerland. On his return he studied pottery with T.A. Fernemore at Stoke-on-Trent and had a kiln built in the

pumphouse at Charleston. Politically, he shared Fernemore's support for industrial art - Vanessa, Duncan and even the young Angelica contributed to Fernemore's series of artist-designed tableware for Foley China - but he returned ultimately to the Bell-Grant celebration of the handmade. He threw shapes for decoration by his mother and Duncan, and, in later years could not always distinguish between their hands and his own.

Bell then divided his considerable energies between painting, pottery and politics. In 1930 he had exhibited in a mixed show at the Mansard Gallery on the top floor of 14-15 in Tottenham Court Road, and had an exhibition of collages in Cork Street in 1935.

He designed posters appealing for medical aid for Spain during the Civil War, and with his mother visited Picasso in his Paris studio - where they saw the as yet unfinished masterpiece Guernica - to invite him to London to appeal for aid for the children of Bilbao. Bell's elder brother Julian was killed in Spain working for the ambulance service on the Republican side.

Bell, unlike many of the members of Old Bloomsbury, was not a conscientious objector. He was rejected by the Army on account of his history of tuberculosis. During the Second World War he worked as a farm labourer for Maynard Keynes at Tilton. From 1941 to 1943 he was a member of the Political Warfare Executive.

The life-sized effigy of Hitler burnt on Fife Beacon at the end of the war was his handiwork. Also during the war he collaborated with Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and his sister Angelica on the decoration of Berwick church, two miles from Charleston. His contributions were the six small panels representing the sacraments on the inside of the chancel screen, and The Wise and Foolish Virgins over the chancel arch; later, he did some murals and the altarpiece.

In 1947 Bell published his first book, On Human Finery, about fashion in dress - a subject that was to be extended into a lifelong consideration of changing tastes and fluctuating reputations in art.

In 1951 he published These Impossible - English (with Helmut Gerstheim), and married Anne Olivier Popham. The following year he



Art at the University of Hull, 1965-66. In 1967 he moved back to his home territory as Professor of the History and Theory of Art at Sussex University, a post he held for ten years, living with his family at Cobbe Place, Boddingtonham. When Cobbe Place finally became impracticable, the Bells moved to their last home, in Fife village. The last major show of his own work was in 1986. He

never stopped painting, potting and writing. He published Roger Montané in 1961; The Schools of Design and Ruskin, both in 1963; Victorian Artists (1967); Bloomsbury (1968); A New and Noble School (1982); Techniques of Terracotta (1983).

His novel The Brandon Papers typified his humour and versatility. It starts with an inquiry into the death of a titled lady and develops into a full-blooded Gothic melodrama.

Just before the Second World War, during an evening of amateur dramatics at Charleston, the young Quentin Bell dressed up in a frock, fur coat and lipstick, to act the part of a guide showing a party of American and French ladies round the house in the year 2036. The cult of Charleston did not take so long to establish itself as that. The Charleston Trust, of which he was the first chairman, opened the house to the public in 1986.

Living all his life under the shadow of Bloomsbury, Bell was the curator, and to some extent the creator, of its growing legend. At Leonard Woolf's request he undertook the biography of Virginia Woolf - no easy task for a nephew - which, published in two volumes in 1972, won both the James Tait Black prize and the Duff Cooper memorial prize. His wife Oliver is the editor of Virginia Woolf's diaries. They have documented Bloomsbury with scrupulous care and respect.

Although always courteous, he was rightly impatient of worshippers at the Bloomsbury shrine who came "to ask what Virginia had for breakfast". But he was welcoming and generous to those who shared his irreverent enthusiasm for art.

For Bell, as for Roger Fry, the purpose of art was to communicate joy. He enjoyed throwing and experimenting with the clay and with the decorative possibilities of robust but humble shapes such as mugs or tea-pots, and rather despised the lack of frivolity in the "prim and proper" pots made by Bernard Leach's followers.

RUBY MURRAY

Ruby Murray, Irish singer, died from bronchial pneumonia and liver cancer yesterday aged 61. She was born on March 29, 1935.

IN THE ephemeral world of popular music, Ruby Murray was a phenomenon who earned her place in the Guinness Book of Theatrical Records. A singer whose simplistic style disguised skilful phrasing and far greater vocal resources than her appealing huskiness suggested, she achieved massive popularity at the start of her meteoric career, when five of her recordings were simultaneously in the Top Twenty for three months at the beginning of 1955.

One of them, the haunting Softly Softly, went to No 1 and became her indelible signature tune for the rest of her life. Her first remains a world record, equalled since by Elvis Presley and Madonna, but unsurpassed by even the Beatles.

Ruby Florence Campbell Murray was born at 84 Moltick Street, Donegal Road, Belfast, the youngest of four children. She gave her first public performances as a child in amateur concerts presented by her father at the Ulster Hall. One of these was seen by the British television producer, Richard Arnold, who booked her for her professional debut, aged 12, on Irish television.

After leaving school at 14, she worked in a bakery, a handkerchief factory and a sweet shop before touring Northern Ireland in the variety show, Top Flight Stars. At 14, she appeared at the Glasgow Pavilion in the summer season revue, Mrs Mulligan's Hotel, returning home to tour Northern Ireland again in a hired lorry in Holiday Express.

At 16 she was chosen as the singer for a revue touring the Republic of Ireland, Yankee Doodle Blarney. In June 1954, the tour ended in London at the old Metropolitan Music Hall, in Edgware Road. Richard Arnold, looking for a singer to replace Joan Kegan in his BBC television series, Quite

Contrary, offered her the job at £100 a week, six times what she was earning at the time. The British record producer Ray Marjin saw Murray's first television show and at once signed her for a recording contract on the Columbia UK label. Her first release, Got Well Soon, was not a big seller, but her second, Heartbeat, went straight to No 2 in the charts. It was followed by Softly Softly, which went to No 1. A wistful love ballad sung with her inimitable Irish



lilt and that husky catch in her voice, it personified the vulnerability and innocence that made her unique among the popular singers of the 1950s.

Three more hits joined the first two in the Top Twenty: Happy Days and Lonely Nights, which went to No 4, If Anyone Finds This I Love You to No 5, and Evermore to No 6. Signed up by Bernard Delfont's agency, she started to pack theatres all over Britain, and in August 1955 opened at the London Palladium in Pointing the Town, which co-starred Norman Wisdom.

During the seven months' run she appeared before the Queen in the Royal Variety Performance. Later, on her arrival in the United States, she was astonished to find herself mobbed by hysterical crowds and to be told by Frank Sinatra that he was her greatest fan.

In 1956 she sang You Are My First Love in the John Mills film, It's Great to Be

Young, and then co-starred with Frankie Howerd and Dennis Price in the screen comedy, A Touch of the Sun, in which she gave a refreshing and totally natural performance as a singing hotel chambermaid.

She proved that she could dance as well as she sang when she appeared on television with Tommy Steele in The Golden Year. She also starred in pantomime, playing the title role in Cinderella and principal girl in Babes in the Wood, Dick Whittington and Puss in Boots.

In August 1957, while appearing with Tommy Cooper in Blackpool, she married Bernard Burgess of The Jones Boys harmony group. They were to have two children and were to co-star in a nationwide tour of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs in 1962. But the marriage came under increasing strain because of Murray's dependence on alcohol and wistfulness, and Burgess was wounded to learn of his wife's infatuation with a married man, the Irish comedian Frank Carson, an episode bleakly reflected in her dramatic recording, I'll Walk the Rest of the Way.

By 1970, when Murray, then 35, re-entered the British charts with Change your Mind, there was no disguising the extent of her drinking. When she and Burgess were divorced in 1977, he won custody of their children and also retained Rectory Cottage, their 17th-century home at Wootton in Northamptonshire. The last 20 years of her life were spent with the former stage dancer and theatrical impresario, Ray Lamar, with whom she lived in Torquay. They were married in 1993.

Although her later appearances were often undermined by health problems, she never gave up her fight to conquer her illness. In 1985 she received a prolonged ovation when she appeared before the Princess Royal in Forty Years of Peace.

Both her husbands were at her hospital bedside, with her son - the singer Tim Murray - and her daughter Julie, when she died.

BRIAN TETLEY

Brian Tetley, journalist, died on November 23 aged 62. He was born on July 12, 1934.



BRIAN TETLEY died with his longtime friend and colleague, the award-winning cameraman Mohamed Amin, on the hijacked Ethiopian Airlines flight that crashed off the Comoros Islands last month. Inevitably, his death has tended to be overshadowed by that of the better-known Amin, but Tetley was, in fact, one of Africa's most colourful and eccentric characters.

He was mourned in his beloved Kenya as a hero, fêted by many in Government, the Civil Service and journalism, all of whom acknowledged his personal and professional debt to one they regarded as "the best man in Africa". Brian Harrison Tetley was born in Birmingham. His mother died when he was ten and his father sent him and his older brother, Peter, to the Stanley House School in Birmingham. The younger brother remembered it as a "draughty, miserable, God-forsaken place from which I couldn't wait to get out".

His parents had moved from Manchester to Solihull in 1931 - and then into Birmingham to expand their engineering business - but Tetley displayed no inclination to go into the family firm. Instead, at the age of 15, he left school to join the Birmingham Gazette and Dispatch as a copy boy. It was the beginning of what was to become a lifelong obsession with a profession he was to decorate with a wit and a generosity of spirit seldom equaled.

Apart from his National Service, which he recalled as "undistinguished", Tetley worked in newspapers, magazines and television on two continents and will be remembered as an impetuous, compulsive journalist of the hard-living, hard-drinking school. Asked by one newspaper editor if he had a drinking problem, Tetley replied: "Yes, I just can't get enough of it." Almost every barman, taxi driver and street vendor in East Africa knew the dishevelled Tetley as Mumbo, "Mambo Gekuku" was the Kikuyu pen name he used to sign off his "Mambo", "Dear God" and "Off the Wall" columns that enchanted generations of African readers. His colleagues knew him as a consummate ideas man who had graduated from a tabloid background - in Britain, he was reputedly a co-creator of Reginald Smythe's Andy Capp cartoon character in the Daily Mirror - to become a witty and prolific writer. He first came to Africa in

1965 to help train Kenyan journalists but stayed the rest of his life in a country he came to love as his own. He held court at all hours, enrapturing his students, in the aptly named Sans Chique bar behind The Daily Nation.

Tetley was the first reporter fearlessly to expose the mass killings of Idi Amin's regime after Amin seized power in Uganda in 1971. He wrote eyewitness accounts for The Observer of corpses thrown to the crocodiles at Jinja. No one believed him at first. Idi Amin had been seen by many in Britain as a great improvement in every way on the despotic socialist Milton Obote.

After editing publications as diverse as Nairobi's Sunday Post and the comparatively muted Kenyan version of Men Only magazine, Tetley went on to write classic African travel books, including the Journey Through... series. On God's Mountain and Cradle of Mankind. In these his eloquent prose was matched by Mohamed Amin's breathtaking photographs.

Some 600 mourners of every age, religion and colour attended his funeral in Nairobi last week - from the old white settlers and friends to cloth-washed Somalis and ordinary street people. He was buried with two bottles of his favourite Tusker lager inside his coffin. Tetley would have enjoyed that, as he would the presence of three ex-wives alongside his widow. He was married twice in Britain - where he is survived by three adult daughters - and at least five times to Africans, by whom he had no children.

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FACCENDA CHICKEN

NEWSPAPER WARS - THE WINNERS AND LOSERS

DAILY TITLES

Table with columns: Newspaper Name, November 1996, Average Daily Sale, Change since Nov 1995, % +/-

SUNDAY TITLES

Table with columns: Newspaper Name, November 1996, Av. Sunday Sale, Change since Nov 1995, % +/-

Newspapers at war

Rarely has the in-fighting between two major newspaper groups been so fierce as the war being waged between The Times and The Daily Telegraph.

Jeremy Deedes, managing director of the Telegraph, confirmed yesterday that the group has issued a writ for breach of undertaking against the Audit Bureau of Circulations after it decided last Friday - following a complaint from News International which owns The Times - to omit the daily and Sunday Telegraph titles from its monthly audit of national newspaper sales.

Both groups agree that sales of The Daily Telegraph last month were 1.1 million, its highest sale for six years. They agree that sales of The Times, boosted by the success of its Eurostar promotion, hit a new record of 861,931, up 500,000 since the price was reduced three years ago, and selling more last month than the sales of The Guardian and The Independent combined.

They disagree strongly, however, over what sort of sales are being registered in the all-important "full price" category used by advertisers to determine where best to buy their advertising space.

The Times registers its cover price as 10p on Monday, 35p from Tuesday to Friday, and 50p on Saturday. That shows sales at the full price of 802,000, with an additional 19,500 declared at a lesser rate and 39,800 as "bulk" sales, mostly papers offered free to customers at Trust House Forte hotels.



PAPER ROUND Brian MacArthur

After Peter Stothard, Editor of The Times, disclosed last week that the paper had been breaking even in recent weeks for the first time in living memory, Mr Deedes responded by promising to write a personal cheque to charity for £1,000 if Mr Murdoch showed audited accounts proving that The Times was in the black.

It is a system that has worked for 65 years but which has been put under increasing strain as newspapers have sought ever more ingenious methods of increasing circulation - including scratch cards, rail, ferry and hotel promotions, special subscription offers and offering free papers at hotels or petrol stations.

which is so far failing to show any leap forward after its conversion to a seven-day title. Although under rejuvenated editorship, The Independent is also losing ground. As sales of The Guardian remain above 400,000, The Independent's have fallen by 32,000 (11 per cent) in the past year. As The Observer meanwhile registered its highest sale, this year of 467,000, sales of the Independent on Sunday have slumped by 47,000.

Circulation battle goes to tribunal

THE spat between the Telegraph group and the Audit Bureau of Circulations - over whether copies of the daily paper sold under its special 6p per week subscription offer counted as full-price sales - came as no surprise to former Telegraph employee Tony Gearing.

THE LISTENER



Liz Hurley and Hugh Grant: critics are not impressed

Among the greatest unintended comic creations of film? Now, her first foray into production seems to have left her in a spin. Extreme Measures, a medical thriller starring Hugh Grant, is the first project from Simian Films, the couple's development company. But the plot appears to have bamboozled the Esteé Lauder model.

History frisson

RESEARCH by MAG, the Museums and Galleries Magazine, claims that museums are more likely to make your heart leap than television. The magazine wired up a fit young man to a heart monitor. His heartbeat increased by six while watching The X-Files, by seven when witnessing the shooting of Ian Beale in East-Enders and by ten when viewing Basic Instinct.

In on the act

HAS the BBC run out of on-screen talent? Following news that its production supremo Alan Yentob is to present an

Beyond the black box waits the television-computer

Who's afraid of the market giants?

Everybody has 20-20 hindsight, so the wry joke goes. And the joke is wrong. Nothing is so murky as the past. What does gleam crystal-clear is the future.

television, the Department of National Heritage last year came up with rules as fussy and over-detailed as a Madonna dress. Surprise, surprise. Enthusiasm for digital terrestrial has been low, while panic about BSkyB's plans to push ahead with digital satellite has been high.



BRENDA MADDOX

Neither of these assumptions is certain. Let me try to throw a few shafts of darkness into the light. The reason why BSkyB dominates the satellite market altogether is because Home Office policy in the early 1980s directed British investors to invest in the wrong kind of satellite.

My candidate for Media Manipulation of the Year has to go to The Trial of Kevin Maxwell, the rocky television portrait of Kevin and Pandora Maxwell and their adorable brood last month.

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THE TIMES

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 18 1996

MPs recommend DTI be deprived of financial supervision role

Bank attacked over Barings

By JASON NISSE
AND GAVIN LUMSDEN

AN ALL-PARTY committee of MPs yesterday attacked the Bank of England over its role in the collapse of Barings in February 1995 and said that, unless it changes the way it operates, banking regulation should be taken away from the Bank.

The report of the Treasury Select Committee, which took 13 months to complete but had to be published a day early because of leaks, also attacks the auditors of Barings, the Securities & Futures Authority (SFA) and questions the effectiveness of international co-ordination when it comes to supervising financial markets. It also recommends that, as soon as possible, all regulation of the financial markets is taken away from the Department of Trade and Industry and given to the Treasury.

But the main attack of the report, which was only signed by three members of the committee, Barry Legge, Nigel Forman and Diane Abbott, is on the Bank. The MPs take the view that the Bank's closeness to the institutions it regulates, and because of its proximity to the day-to-day banking market, is an impediment to effective regulation.

The MPs described the Bank as a "cheerleader for the City" and in a final line, which will be of great concern to Michael Foot, the Bank's director of banking supervision, the report says that to "bring about the necessary cultural change, banking supervision will have to be taken away from the Bank of England."



Leeson: rogue trader



Michael Foot, head of supervision, a role MPs suggest may come to an end



George: cheerleader

The Bank was at pains to say this was not a recommendation, only a comment. However, privately the Bank is seething about the comments of the MPs, who it feels do not understand the Bank's special role in the UK financial market: a role that is unique among leading financial regulators. Officials pointed to the

Bank's statute, which defines one of its roles as making sure that the financial infrastructure of the City is in place. The Bank sees this as a role completely at odds with the idea that it could be a "cheerleader" for any particular institutions.

The MPs attacked the Bank for its failure to co-ordinate the regulation of Barings and said there was a question of "too many cooks". It records that the Singapore investigators gained "limited assistance" from the Bank and suspects that the two regulators were working in competition rather than co-ordination, adding that the evidence of Eddie George, the Governor of the

Bank "failed to allay our concerns in this respect". Though the Bank does not accept this criticism, a spokesman said: "We have long recognised that there is a need for improved regulatory co-ordination and, since the collapse of Barings, we have been working hard at ways of taking that forward."

Since Nick Leeson, a rogue dealer, caused the collapse of 223-year-old Barings, Howard Davies, the deputy governor of the Bank, has joined the Securities & Investment Board, the lead regulator for financial markets, and Sir Andrew Large, chairman of the SIB, has joined the Board of Banking Supervision. In a speech

last week, Mr Davies noted that, although banks were different from securities firms, the organisations are converging and supervision may go the same way.

The MPs said that it would improve co-ordination in regulation if responsibility was put under one Government department, and recommended that the Treasury, not the Department of Trade and Industry, was given the role.

To date there has been only one casualty at the Bank of England, Christopher Thompson, who resigned in the summer of 1995.

The report was critical of the role of Coopers & Lybrand, the auditors of Barings. A key recommendation of the MPs is that reports under Section 39 of the Banking Act, which are conducted at the request of the Bank when it has concerns about a financial institution which it regulates, should be done by a separate firm of accountants than the auditors.

"This would avoid any real or apparent conflict of interest," said the report. This was not accepted by the Bank, those it regulates or the accountants. Coopers said: "This only adds value in exceptional cases. We do not accept that any real conflict of interest exists where this is not the case." Coopers added that the real issue was that, although the Bank of England sets the broad guidelines for a Section 39 report, the detail is left to the bank, which is paying the auditor.

The British Banking Association was concerned that the move could raise auditing costs without adding value. Many Section 39 reports cost over £250,000 and one is believed to have cost £750,000. The Bank also expressed concern about the cost of the reports and whether bringing an external accountant in to report would lose the closeness and knowledge of the bank that the auditor had.

MPs leave questionmark over future of regulators

The Bank of England's future role: "The Bank is able to demonstrate that it is in need to separate its supervisory functions from its other functions and avoid any possible weakening of its regulatory effectiveness due to its proximity to the day to day banking market. Otherwise it may be that in order to bring about the necessary cultural change banking supervision will have to be taken away from the Bank of England."

at times there may be too many cooks, and those with front line expertise may be excluded from international discussions. Furthermore, we remain surprised that the Bank, as lead regulator of Barings, did not co-ordinate the response."

The auditors, Coopers & Lybrand: "One of the key checks, that of the auditors, upon which shareholders should be able to rely, failed over a number of years to reveal weak internal controls and resulting unauthorised behaviour."

The Treasury's role: "Ministerial responsibility for all aspects of financial regulation and supervision, including the prudential supervision of the insurance industry, should be transferred to HM Treasury at the earliest opportunity."

How they reacted to the findings of the report

Barry Legge, Conservative MP for Milton Keynes SW: "The Bank of England didn't give information to the Singapore inspectors represented by Price Waterhouse. This obviously caused a lot of bad feeling. Eddie George denied the problem existed. We weren't convinced."

The British Bankers Association said that the failure of Barings could be seen as a success of the system. "You shouldn't guarantee that a bank can never fail," it said.

Nadir aide refused bail

ELIZABETH FORSYTH, the former Asil Nadir aide serving five years in prison for handling stolen funds, has failed in an attempt to be released on bail pending an appeal next month. The court bail application by Forsyth, 59, came six months after her conviction on two counts of handling £400,000 stolen from Polly Peck International. Her counsel argued for her release from an open prison near Rochester, Kent, on health grounds. Forsyth has had a worrying rise in blood-pressure and is concerned about her elderly mother in Essex.

Selloff proceeds flatter PSBR

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT
GOVERNMENT borrowing totalled £2.6 billion in November, with continuing overruns in public spending being disguised by proceeds from the sale of Ministry of Defence married quarters. The Public Sector Borrowing Requirement was exactly in line with City expectations, which broadly endorse the Treasury's view that it is on track to meet its £26.4 billion projection for the whole year. Cumulative borrowing over the first eight months totalled £13.9 billion, compared with £22.4 billion over the same period last year. Taking out

Strike vote at Lloyds TSB

WORKERS at Lloyds TSB have voted in favour of taking strike action in protest at the bank's decision to open branches until 4.30pm on Christmas Eve. The Banking Insurance and Finance Union balloted 18,000 of Lloyds TSB's 40,000 staff. Sixty five per cent of the 37 per cent who voted, voted in favour of strike action on Christmas Eve. The bank said: "We are a retailer. All other retailers are open on Christmas Eve, so we should be open. Only about 4,000 of the staff voted in favour. Most of our staff have an interest in serving our customers." Pennington, page 25

Sheffield United joins stock market

By JASON NISSE
SHEFFIELD UNITED will become the sixth football club to join the stock market today when it reveals a £21.5 million reverse takeover of Conrad, the leisurewear group best known for Le Coq Sportif. Conrad is paying £9.5 million for the Nationwide First Division club and the combined group will immediately launch a £12 million rights issue to fund development of United's ground at Bramhall Lane in central Sheffield. The plan is to create a 40,000 all-seat stadium and develop the 17-acre site where

Building workers get fired up for new year

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR
YOU MAY WANT a winter holiday. Your children may want a games computer. John Major and Tony Blair both want to be Prime Minister. But in the new year, what do many of Britain's construction workers want? They want to fire someone. With Christmas out of the way, January is a traditional

month for employees to be pushed out towards the dole queue. However, as the festive season approaches, a new survey shows that, in the building industry at least, some employees' thoughts are turning to the sack - giving it, not getting it. Hays Montrose, the recruitment consultant, which specialises in the construction and property industries, surveyed a sample of 560 employees work-

ing in building about what they wanted in the new year. More than half want a pay rise, and more than a third are thinking about switching job. However, as many as 14 per cent of those surveyed are looking forward to firing someone - perhaps anyone. In Scotland, the proportion of would-be sackers is higher still, at 22 per cent, and even on the more sedate South Coast of England, firms total

18 per cent of those surveyed. In the sedate Home Counties, the figure drops to 13 per cent, and in the phlegmatic Midlands only 6 per cent of construction employees want to fire someone. Robin Smith, managing director of Hays Montrose, said: "Although, at 14 per cent, the desire to fire someone was relatively low on the scale of priorities for next year, it is still a surprisingly large minority and indicates that, in the tightly-run property and construction companies of the 1990s, people are not prepared to put up with anyone who does not pull their weight." Curiously, four-fifths of the workers surveyed say they expect the jobs situation in the construction industry to be "significantly" better in 1997 than this year. Unless, of course, those aching to axe someone get their new year wish.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	3979.6	(-14.2)
Yield	4.0%	
FTSE All share	1945.45	(-5.75)
Nikkei	20413.46	(-8.56)
New York		
Dow Jones	6284.12	(-4.23)
S&P Composite	721.27	(-0.29)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	9 7/8%	(9 7/8%)
Yield	6.55%	(6.55%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-mth Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Libor long	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)
Future (flat)		
STERLING		
New York		
\$	1.6722*	(1.6663)
London		
£	1.6729	(1.6619)
DM	2.8853	(2.8616)
FF	8.7252	(8.7122)
Sfr	2.2067	(2.2053)
Yen	190.21	(189.53)
£ Index	94.0	(93.7)
DOLLAR		
London		
DM	1.5455*	(1.5450)
FF	5.2195*	(5.2138)
Sfr	1.3210*	(1.3189)
Yen	113.85*	(113.85)
£ Index	96.1	(96.4)
Tokyo close Yen	113.74	
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$23.50	(\$23.85)
GOLD		
London close	\$368.95	(\$367.55)

On the rails

More than 100,000 pensioners could sue for their share of a £500 million surplus in the British Rail pension fund. Aslef and RMT, the railway workers' unions, said they would be prepared to take legal action to recover money they regarded as due to pensioners. Page 24

Metal bashing

FKI, the engineering group, launched a hostile bid for Newman Tonks after winning the support of the largest investors of the building materials group. Page 25, Tempos 26

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News Corp in Japan venture

The News Corporation and Softbank of Japan yesterday launched Japan Sky Broadcasting, a television company that will provide the platform for hundreds of new digital satellite channels.

Digital TV rules changed

The Government has amended its digital television regulations to include tougher safeguards against anti-competitive behaviour in the supply of conditional access services.

Jobs forecast

Britain's small firms are unlikely to be the principal source of sustained new jobs, a study from the Employment Policy Institute says today.

Firms merge

Cameron Markby Hewitt and McKenna & Co, two of the City's leading law firms, are to merge.

Costain deal

Costain has won a £30 million contract to build a railway engineering workshop and associated housing in Malaysia.



Sir Paul Nicholson, Vaux chairman, yesterday when he unveiled full-year profits up 9 per cent to £35 million

Pensioners may sue over BR fund's £500m surplus

MORE THAN 100,000 pensioners could sue for their share of a £500 million surplus in the British Rail pension fund, it emerged yesterday. Aslef and RMT, the railway workers' unions, said that they would be prepared to take legal action to recover money they regarded as due to pensioners.

Misys buys in US and France

MISYS, the computer software and services company, yesterday announced acquisitions in America and France worth an initial £36.6 million (Martin Barrow writes). The company is buying Summit Systems, a private company based in New York that sells integrated financial derivatives trading software.

Vaux in talks over non-core assets

SIR PAUL NICHOLSON, the chairman of Vaux Group, yesterday said that the brewing and hotel company was in negotiations to sell non-core assets but was not prepared to make disposals at any price.

Vaux has put its nursing home division and five smaller hotels, with a total book value of about £50 million, on the market. The company yesterday unveiled a 9 per cent increase in its full-year profits, to £35 million. Turnover also rose by 9 per cent to £282 million.

The managed pub division, which includes 165 pubs, increased profits by 17 per cent to £9 million. Vaux aims to increase its managed pubs by 25 this year, including five new ones.

Profits from the 700-strong tenanted pub estate fell by 12 per cent, to £12.9 million, because of heavy investment, although the company said that it should benefit from the expenditure this year. Sir Paul said that current-year trading has started well and that all the businesses have good prospects.

Pennington, page 25

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Higgs and Hill sells its construction arm

A PREMIER league of contractors in UK construction is squeezing out medium-sized companies. John Theakston, chief executive of Higgs and Hill, the construction, property and homes company, said yesterday as it announced the sale of its troubled construction division to Hollandsche Beton Groep of The Netherlands, for £28.5 million, subject to £6 million from approval.

Kunick takes half stake

KUNICK, the gaming company, is paying £3.4 million for a 50 per cent stake in Bell-Fruit Manufacturing, Gauselmann, the German amusement machine company, is buying the other half. Kunick, which is the largest purchaser of gaming machines in the UK, also reported a 10 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £9.1 million in the year to September 30.

Novartis deal approved

AMERICA'S Federal Trade Commission has ruled that Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz can merge to form the world's second-largest pharmaceuticals group if they sell certain businesses. Novartis, the name of the merged Swiss companies, will be exceeded in size only by Glaxo Wellcome. The FTC requires Novartis to sell or license products in three areas in which Ciba and Sandoz overlapped.

Mersey strike offer

THE Mersey Docks and Harbour Company has made an "ultimatum closing offer" to 329 sacked dockers, in the latest attempt to end a 15-month dispute. Of £25,000 severance payment or the chance to apply for one of up to 40 jobs in a 12-week fixed contract of employment during which they will not have to work. The dockers have been given until December 31 to conduct a secret ballot on the offer.

Eurotherm on lookout

EUROTHERM will focus on acquisitions as part of a strategic review after last summer's boardroom clash. With cash balances of £34 million, the electronics manufacturer has pronounced itself "able to grasp opportunities should they arise". In the year to October 31, pre-tax profits rose to £37.7 million (£34.1 million) and earnings per share grew 10 per cent to 27.6p. The dividend was increased to 9p (7.5p), with a 5p final due on February 28.

Sherwood shares hit

SHARES of Sherwood Group, the clothing manufacturer, fell 30 per cent to a five-year low of 41½p yesterday after the company issued its second profit warning in six months. Pre-tax profits in the second half are set to be well below the £3.75 million reported in September for the first half. Full-year profits will include £3.1 million reorganisation costs, £2.3 million of which will be in the second half. The company plans to maintain the total dividend for the year at the 1995 level of 3.6p.

Aberdeen 'squeezes' fees

ABERDEEN TRUST saw a 26 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £7 million for the year to September 30 but said it had succeeded as much income fund management fees as was possible. It would now have to exploit opportunities for growth in the US, Singapore and the UK. The loss of £120 million Lloyd's funds to Equitas meant overall funds under management grew £137 million to £2.84 billion. A final dividend of 2.2p, payable March 5, is 28 per cent higher.

UB sells Ross for £44m

MANAGERS of the Ross frozen vegetables firm have bought the business from United Biscuits for £44 million. They have formed a new company, RVP Foods, which is supported by the private equity arm of the Union Bank of Switzerland. Proceeds from the sale will be used to repay United Biscuits' borrowings. Last year, Ross had sales of £56.1 million and operating profits of £6.2 million. It has net assets of £11.4 million. The disposal will lead to a write-off of £51 million.

Coats Viyella lifted

SHARES of Coats Viyella, the largest supplier of clothing to Marks & Spencer, rose 5p from a five-year low of 122p after the company said lower raw material prices should offset eight margins to produce second half operating profits similar to those of last year. Ladieswear sales were strong but knitwear and men's and children's clothing has been disappointing. A steady second half will still mean lower full-year profits as interim earnings were 34 per cent lower at £47 million.

Severn Trent buyback

SEVERN TRENT, the water company barred last month from bidding for South West Water, yesterday added to the utilities' shareholder bonanza with a £124.5 million buyback of its own shares. It will spend further cash "as appropriate". The company bought 4.9 per cent of its shares in the market at 675p after an announcement last month that it would buy back 10 per cent of its equity. Severn Trent has followed other utilities in delivering substantial shareholder returns.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES 0171-782 7344

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES 0171-782 7344. A large section containing various legal notices, company announcements, and public notices. Includes sections for 'LEGAL NOTICES', 'NOTICE TO CREDITORS', and 'LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES'. Contains numerous small notices regarding company matters, legal proceedings, and public information.

Fairey makes surprise bid for Burnfield

BY MARTIN BARROW

FAIREY GROUP, the industrial electronics and specialist engineering company, has launched a surprise £51.1 million takeover bid for Burnfield, the engineering business.

Burnfield, whose chairman is Brian McGowan, urged shareholders to reject the offer, setting the scene for an acrimonious takeover battle. Fairey's bid is conditional on Burnfield shareholders voting against the proposed £24

million purchase of Ling Dynamics and accompanying £20.3 million rights issue. These were announced on Friday and an extraordinary meeting has been convened for December 30.

Fairey wants to combine its existing process technology businesses with Beta and Malvern, Burnfield's two main subsidiaries. However, Fairey contends that the long purchase will be heavily diluted and serve as a distraction from Burnfield's existing businesses.

Fairey is offering one new share for every four Burnfield shares, valuing each Burnfield share at 145.5p. There is a full cash alternative of 135p. Burnfield investors will also receive the final dividend of 2.2p a share as forecast by the company.

Burnfield shares rose 36p to 136p yesterday. The shares had fallen from 111½p since Friday in response to the rights issue of new shares at 90p each. Fairey shares fell 1½p to 52½p yesterday.

Mr McGowan, who holds about a million Burnfield shares, said that Fairey was offering a knockdown price.



McGowan: urges rejection

Staged reductions to £330,000 planned

Hanson cuts his pay packet

BY GEORGE SIVELL

LORD Hanson, who has slimmed down many a tabby enterprise in his time, is to half his pay packet and then half it again.

Shareholders are told in the Hanson annual report that he halved his pay with effect from October 1, the start of the new financial year, in recognition of the demerger of Imperial, the tobacco business, and Millennium, the chemicals business.

TOURIST RATES

Table of Tourist Rates. Columns: Bank, Buy, Sell. Rows: Australia \$, Austria Sch, Belgium Fr, Canada \$, Cyprus Cyp, Denmark Dkr, Finland Mk, France Fr, Germany DM, Greece Dr, Hong Kong \$, Italy Lit, Israel Sh, Japan Yen, Korea Won, Malaysia M, Netherlands Gld, New Zealand \$, Norway Kr, Portugal Esc, Spain Ptas, Switzerland Fr, Turkey Lira, USA \$.

bid Tonks elected

□ Northern battle nears its end □ Fresh wrangle over pension rights □ Bank takes flak from Barings

When small investors count

□ MOST takeover bids work out their passage in their stylised way, with the usual choreographed moves and counter-moves en route, which are of enormous fascination to the participants and to the industry of advisers who earn multi-million pound fees but of limited interest elsewhere. We had two such yesterday, a couple of engineers bidding for smaller and less successful rivals.

Just a few, however, have resonance beyond the investment community and their respective industries. Forts versus Granada was one such, ending in a defeat for an incumbent management that had played the loyalty card to fund managers without any solid achievements to back this up. At the time there was much talk about City short-termism; the improvements Granada has achieved since suggest that support for Forte management would have meant taking a long-term view to excess.

Some similar arguments are being fielded in the CalEnergy bid for Northern Electric. It is a case of cash now, or support for a management that has done about all it humanly can to provide the maximum shareholder value as an alternative. CalEnergy's 650p terms were initially seen as unattractive. Two new factors have intervened

since. A couple of precipitate market collapses have made 650p in cash more attractive than it had once seemed. The bid, which had been expected to be blocked by Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, was waved through. Had the bid lapsed, Northern shareholders would not have seen the money anyway. But its clearance also suggests open season for those three other regional electricity companies not yet under new ownership. Expect action soon — possibly even before the Northern bid closes.

Clearance raised the value of such businesses, and so by extension that of Northern. If the CalEnergy bid fails, the theory suggests, there will be another along in due course — possibly even from the same bidder at a higher price, if agreed. This is allowed under Takeover Panel rules, and Northern has indicated a fair value in the £7 area. Meanwhile the latter's stated dividend policy, a 99.2p payment in February, a prospective 10 per cent yield the year after and annual dividend growth of 8 per cent to the end of

the century, puts a fair support under the current share price.

The battle, which closes on Friday, will turn around those 19 per cent of Northern investors who are private shareholders, and therefore inclined to support the board. The City institutions, barring a couple of exceptions who have already declared themselves against the bid, will take the money. That 19 per cent have an exceptional opportunity to take a supportive stance, while still able to rely on the high dividends already promised. The betting is that the City will decide the affair. But local investors could choose to swing the matter.

Temptation in a little pot of gold

□ GOVERNMENT ministers took the same attitude to pensions as other furtive 1980s' employers in the messier privatisations such as buses, electricity and rail. If British Aerospace or British Telecom were sold intact, pensions simply went with them. When the old state organisation was broken up, all sorts of



possibilities (and responsibilities) suddenly opened up. Pensioners had to be protected. But when highly paid advisers pointed out that state industry pension funds had surpluses that could be used to help to finance costly restructuring — or even just furnish Treasury coffers — ministers' eyes lit up with the childish delight of a lucky fruit-machine pumper. Their delight was the greater because breaking up an industry otherwise yielded far less than selling it to the public intact.

In the National Bus break-up, Government niftily seized rights to any surplus in an unequal exchange for some less-than-generous guarantees. In electricity, surpluses were apportioned

with striking generosity towards new employers that needed to finance the extra pension cost of associated redundancies.

By the time the centrifuge approach to privatisation reached its apogee on the railways, the form was well established. Surpluses could be used to slim franchise subsidies by allowing bidders to see that they could enjoy a contributions holiday. In a twisted way, it makes sense. The surpluses are being retained in the industry, allowing the franchise director to obtain a better deal on services or investment for the same subsidy.

As soon as fund members started challenging these deals with the pensions ombudsman, however, awkward questions arose. How should trustees share such surpluses between member and employer? And what pressures are put on trustees to do what the Government wants? In the bus case, the ombudsman ruled that pressure has been unfair, though ministers still hope the courts will let them keep the surplus. Electricity workers were hard done by, according to the ombuds-

man. Whitehall and the trustees will surely be anxious to avoid another embarrassing rebuff from the State's own watchdog.

Independence may not be enough

□ ACCUSING the Bank of England of being too close to the City is a little like accusing it of being in Threadneedle Street — it does rather go with the territory. It is impossible to review the Barings saga without disquiet over the way the system was operated, the cosy series of nods and winks that were supposed to be enough but weren't, the chummy assumption that the sheer longevity of the country's oldest merchant bank bestowed the right to operate without supervision.

There is a clear argument to separate the Bank's twin functions of economic stewardship and financial regulation of the banking system, if not least because the first area tends to attract the brightest minds — much more fun to follow the Chancellor from summit to summit dropping pearls of eco-

economic wisdom than trawl wearily through endless financial audits. But it is not so clear whether an independent regulator would be effective merely because it would be independent.

The SEC on Wall Street is held out as a role model by some. But the SEC's success has come about not least because of the weapons available to it, including heavy civil penalties that require a lower burden of proof than criminal remedies — a relevant point the day after Ernest Saunders's victory in the European Court.

Counter call

□ IT WILL be a cold and hungry Christmas Eve in the banking halls this year. The staff at Lloyds/TSB and NatWest have been told to work through the afternoon. The customer comes first, says Lloyds, in a hollow gesture intended to bring goodwill to the high street before overdraft rate charges begin to hurt. But the paupers — sorry, staff — at Lloyds are revolting. Our families come first, they say, leaving NatWest alone to man the counters. But telephone banking goes on heedless of the season of goodwill, a thought that should bring a non-festive shiver to all banking staff — and the prospect of an unsmerry new year for a few thousand of them.

FKI's bid for Tonks is rejected

By OLIVER AUGUST

FKI, the engineering group, yesterday launched a hostile bid for Newman Tonks after winning the support of the largest shareholders of the building materials group.

The cash-and-shares offer values Newman Tonks at £195.7 million. Alternatively, shareholders could take £182.6 million in cash.

FKI had been contemplating a bid for three years, and decided to go ahead only after gaining firm undertakings from M&G and Britannic Assurance, which hold a total of 13.4 per cent of Newman Tonks's equity.

M&G, which is Newman Tonks's largest shareholder, with more than 11 per cent, is irrevocably committed to accepting the offer after years of support for the Newman Tonks board.

M&G's move was regarded as highly significant in the City. Nigel Harrison, of Williams de Broë, the stockbroker, said that M&G's change of mind bode well for FKI.

Newman Tonks shares rose from 129p to 149½p, just shy of FKI's 150p-per-share offer.

Jeff Whalley, FKI chairman, said: "Newman Tonks represents an excellent opportunity to expand our hardware business internationally and in new sectors of the market. We have proven our

ability to enhance the performance of our core businesses in recent years, and I am confident that Newman Tonks's results can be significantly improved under our management."

Mr Whalley said that Newman Tonks's operating margins, earnings per share and dividend had all fallen by at least 11 per cent since 1992.

If the bid succeeds, the enlarged FKI group would have a stronger focus on hardware supplies and double its present hardware turnover. Whereas Newman Tonks operates primarily in Europe, 89 per cent of FKI's hardware business is in America.

Newman Tonks responded to the bid by branding it "opportunistic", and saying that it undervalued its businesses.

The company advised shareholders to reject the offer and take no immediate action.

The money payable under the cash alternative will be funded from existing cash resources and through a fully underwritten conditional rights issue of up to two new FKI shares for every 13 existing FKI shares at 175p per share.

FKI shares closed at 196½p, down from 200p.

Times, page 26

Nursing homes 'in decline'

By ERIC REGULY

GOLDSBOROUGH Healthcare predicted yesterday that profit margins in its nursing homes division would continue to come under pressure because of flat or declining occupancy rates.

Graham Smith, chief executive, said funding uncertainties had reduced nursing home occupancy rates from 92.5 per cent last year to 90 per cent now.

The nursing homes division, which includes care homes, reported a 6 per cent decline in operating profits, to £4.5 million, in the year to September 30. The downturn was more than offset by better performances from the hospital and home care business. Pre-tax profits rose 11 per cent to £5.9 million on turnover of £68.7 million, up 34 per cent.

The final dividend, to be paid on February 28, rises 10 per cent to 2.97p, making the total dividend 4.29p.

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Securicor squeezed by competition

By ERIC REGULY

INCREASED competition and weakness in parts of Europe put pressure on the core operations of Securicor, the security and communications group.

Operating profits in its security division, which accounts for almost one third of turnover, declined from £15 million to £12 million in the year to September 30. The company said its British operations suffered from competitors which had reduced prices to "unsustainable levels" and problems in its French operations.

Securicor Cellular Services, its communications business, also suffered a downturn, with a loss of £4.5 million (£2.6 million profit). Securicor blamed the downturn on a shift in the mobile-phone customer base to consumer subscribers, who are more prone to bad debts than business customers.

The other businesses fared better. Parcels distribution, which includes Omega Express and Pony Express, was the star performer with a 57 per cent rise in profits to £21 million. Cellnet, the mobile-phone company which is 40 per cent owned by Securicor and 60 per cent owned by British Telecom, generated £76 million in profits (£70 million). Group pre-tax profits were up 8.1 per cent to £107.4 million. Earnings per share were 11.6p against 10.7p last time, and the final dividend of 1.2p, due on April 4, makes a 1.56p total, up 17 per cent.

Times, page 26

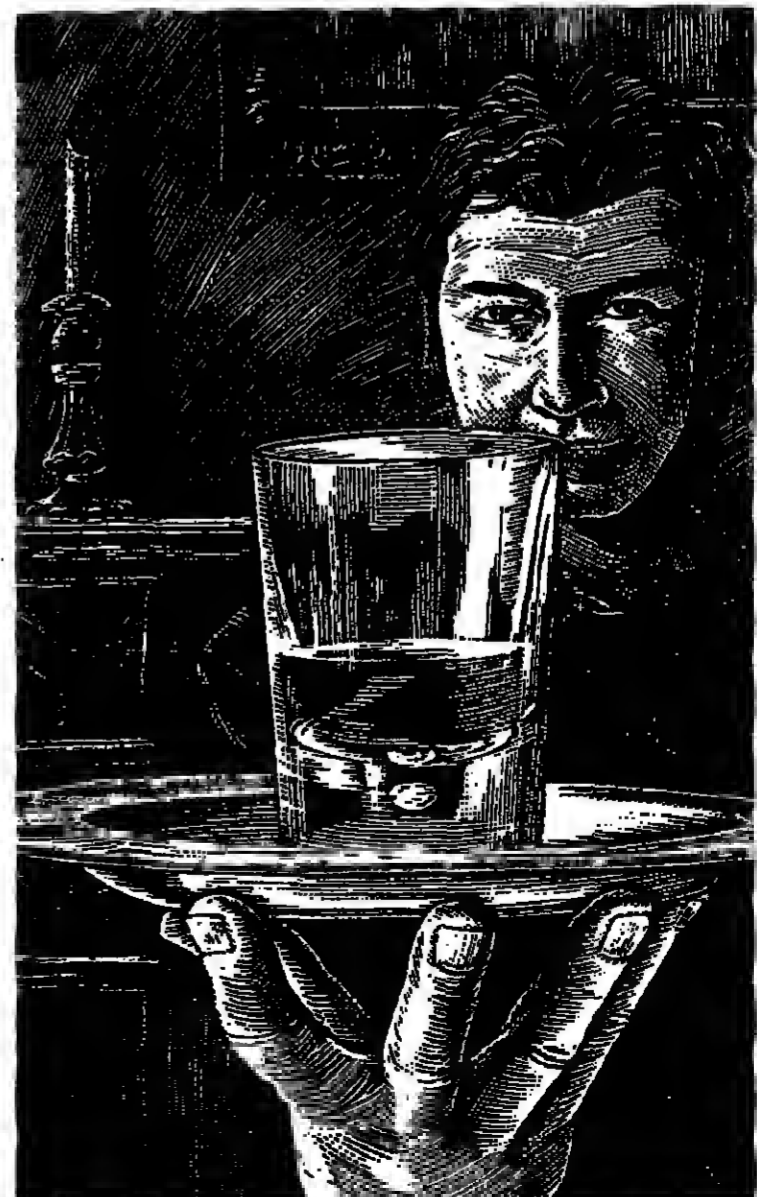


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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Insurance sector heats up as merger rumours grow

THE market remains convinced that it can only be a matter of time before a major deal is announced in the insurance sector.



Kunick was firmer on higher profits for John Jones, finance director, left, Russell Smith, centre, and Clive Clague

that full-year pre-tax profits will be hit by a £55 million restructuring charge. It also warned that operating profits before costs will be similar to the second half of last year.

It seems that a plan by BAT Industries to merge its financial services arm, which includes Allied Hambro, Eagle Star, and Farmers with CU was abandoned a few weeks ago.

But BAT continues to look at ways of expanding. Now the speculators claim it may be looking at General Accident, up 21p at 716½, which is reckoned to be the safest bet after CU. At these levels GA is capitalised at £3.3 billion.

Several Trent Water put on 13½p at 667½p after the group waded into the market and bought back almost 5 per cent of its own shares.

The insurance brokers are also undergoing a period of consolidation. In recent weeks Aon has merged with A&A and earlier this week Lloyd Thompson, 1½p firmer at 175½p, decided to tie the knot with JIB Group, 2p better at 132p.

RTZ, the mining finance group, fell 30p to 921½p on the back of comments made by Broken Hill Proprietary, Australia's largest quoted company, about falling coal prices.

Clubpartners, the AIM-listed leisure group, crashed a further 5p to 2½p after the group admitted that any offers for the company were likely to be pitched at around the 1p level.

British Gas fell 6p to 223½p after ABN Amro Hoare Govett, one of its joint brokers, reduced its break-up value for the company from 240p to 220p.

ICI shares hit by profits downgrading. The FT-SE 100 index reduced a 23-point deficit to close 14.2 down at 3,979.6 as a total of 888 million shares were traded.

in the second half will be "appreciably less" than the £3.75 million achieved in the first six months. The group is maintaining the 3.6p dividend.

Table with columns for COCOA, ROBUSTA COFFEE, WHITE SUGAR, MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION. Includes prices for Dec, Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec.

Table with columns for ICIS-LOR (London & Bahrain), CRUDE OILS (Brent, WTI), WHEAT, BARLEY, POTATO, RUBBER, GNSI, GAS OIL, BRENT, LONDON METAL EXCHANGE. Includes prices for various commodities.

Table with columns for LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES. Includes FTSE 100, FTSE 250, Three Month Euro Yen, Three Mth Euro DM, Long Gilts, Japanese Govt Bond, German Govt Bd Bond, Three Month Euro, Euro Swiss Franc, Italian Govt Bond.

Table with columns for MONEY RATES (%), EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%). Includes rates for various currencies and terms.

Table with columns for WALL STREET. Includes various stock prices and market indicators.

Table with columns for LIFE OPTIONS. Includes various option prices and market data.

Table with columns for FISE INDEX (1974). Includes index values for various years and months.

Table with columns for GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co), STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES. Includes prices for gold, silver, and sterling rates.

Table with columns for FTSE VOLUMES. Includes trading volumes for various FTSE indices.

Table with columns for WALL STREET (continued). Includes additional stock prices and market data.

MAJOR INDICES

Table with columns for New York (midday), Tokyo, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Sydney, Frankfurt, Singapore, Brussels, Paris, Zurich, London. Includes index values and changes.

RECENT ISSUES

Table with columns for Advanced Power Cm, Archer Dedicated, Cadenine, Cell Telecom, Down Th Dusk, Exter Inv, Finsbury Intl Hedge, Future Int Tele, Grantham Hldgs, Heron Tech, Henderson Tech Wrs, Henderson Tech, Hghams Sys Svs, Kern River, Kier Group, Oliver Ashworth, Oxford Biomedical, Partwood Holdings, Pilot Techn, Provend (125), SDX Business Sys, Scott Highland Hts, Second St David Inc, Second St David, Second St David 2 P, Semple Cochrane, Yeoman Group.

RIGHTS ISSUES

Table with columns for Allied Colloids n/p, Arian n/p, Biotec n/p, Biotec Intl n/p.

MAJOR CHANGES

Table with columns for RISES, FALLS. Includes stock prices and changes.

TEMPUS

Engineering a bid

M&G IS the measure of the poor performance at Newman Tonks. Not only has the fund manager encouraged FKJ to launch its bid, but M&G has offered a carrot in the form of a full, irrevocable undertaking to accept FKJ's offer.

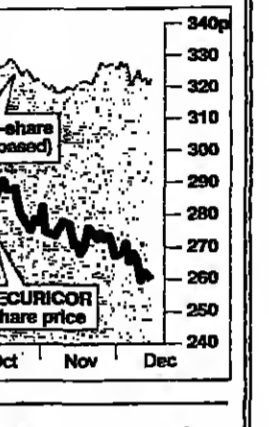
Tonks were responsible for the first-half profits collapse and the business would add little to FKJ. The question is how fast can FKJ boost the Newman Tonks margins.

FKJ will do well out of Newman if it can take its margins up to the 12 per cent level, but that assumption of hidden value raises a problem.

Securicor

SECURICOR continues to wrestle with the same problem. Profits and growth are driven by its 40 per cent stake in Cellnet, the mobile phone company it jointly owns with British Telecom.

The parcels distribution business performs well but the security division, which accounts for almost a third of turnover, has suffered a downturn and its margins are among the lowest in the industry.



T&N

DOGGED determination is what you should expect from T&N, a company that refused to throw in the towel despite having paid out £500 million in claims for asbestos-related injuries.

In the value of the shares, a cost it can ill afford, given the asbestos-related provisions. In due course, the remaining 25 per cent of the Kolbenschmidt stake may follow suit and the question is whether the mystery European investors can help T&N to resolve its battle to control the piston maker.

working hard to transform its image and some £50 million of assets are up for sale, including St Andrew's Care Homes. The brewing division has been put in order, with rising own-brand volumes. The Bass-Carlberg tie-up could actually ease some of the pressure on the company by ending a fierce discounting war that has plagued the beer trade in the North East.

Handwritten note: 100-100-150

Equities halve earlier losses

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Table listing various alcoholic beverage stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

BANKS

Table listing various bank stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

Table listing various brewery, pub, and restaurant stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

Table listing various building and construction stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

BUILDING MATERIALS

Table listing various building materials stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

CHEMICALS

Table listing various chemical stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

DISTRIBUTORS

Table listing various distributor stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

Table listing various diversified industrial stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

ELECTRICITY

Table listing various electricity stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

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ENGINEERING

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INSURANCE

Table listing various insurance stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Table listing various investment trusts with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

Table listing various engineering and vehicle stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

Table listing various food manufacturer stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

HEALTHCARE

Table listing various healthcare stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

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LEISURE & HOTELS

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MINING

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PROPERTY

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Table listing various telecommunications stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

TEXTILES & APPAREL

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TRANSPORT

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RETAILERS, FOOD

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RETAILERS, GENERAL

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WATER

Table listing various water utility stocks with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

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PHARMACEUTICALS

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PRINTING & PAPER

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Table listing various British funds with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

SHORTS (under 5 years)

Table listing various short-term investments with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

LONGS (over 15 years)

Table listing various long-term investments with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

UNLISTED

Table listing various unlisted investments with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

INDEX-LINKED (on projected inflation of 10%)

Table listing various index-linked investments with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % change.

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Main table containing unit trust prices, organized into columns with headers like 'Fund Name', 'Unit Price', 'Change', and 'Bid'. Includes various fund categories such as Equity, Bond, and Money Market.

Advertisement for 'My Hen stock has great liquidity.' featuring an illustration of a hen and a bottle of 'Speckled Hen' Ale. Text includes 'Most Gratifying Ale' and 'Brewed by Marston of Abingdon, Est'd 1711.'

US
ing a bid

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Law Report December 18 1996 Court of Appeal

Circumstances vital to level of care required of rugby referee

Smoldon v Whitworth and Another

Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Lord Justice Mummery and Sir Brian Neill [Judgment December 17]

The level of care required of the referee of an under-19 colts rugby football match towards a player was that appropriate in all the circumstances, taking full account of the factual context in which he was exercising his functions as a referee.

Thomas Whitworth, a fellow player.

Mr Richard Davies, QC and Mr Neil Black for the referee; Mr Peter Andrews, QC and Mr Philip Lehman for the plaintiff.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE, giving the judgment of the court, said that although earlier cases had explored the duty owed by one sporting participant to another (see *Rodges v Whitton* [1968] ALR 331; *Condon v East* [1968] 1 WLR 868) and *Elliot v Saunders* (unreported, QB, June 10, 1994) and that owed by a sporting participant to a spectator (for example *Woodbridge v Sumner* [1963] 2 QB 43) and *Wilks v Cheltenham Homeguard Motor Cycle and Light Car Club* [1971] 1 WLR 608, there appeared to be no previous case in which a rugby football player had sued a referee in negligence.

The present case was of obvious importance to the plaintiff whose capacity for active and independent life had been blighted, but it was also of concern to many who feared that the judgment for the plaintiff would emasculate and crush in unwelcome legal talls a game which gave pleasure to millions.

His Lordship referred to the context in which the issues arose: that rugby football was a tough, highly physical game, not for the timid or the fragile, in which contact in unwelcome legal talls a game which gave pleasure to millions.

The referee's function to supervise the playing of the match, in accordance with the rules of the game fairly and judiciously so as to ensure that the flow of play was not unnecessarily interrupted, that points awarded were fairly scored and that foul or dangerous play was discouraged and, where appropriate, penalised or prevented.

His Lordship said that that function had often to be performed in the context of a fast-moving, competitive and vigorous game, calling for split-second judgments and decisions.

The referee could not be in all parts of the field at the same time; he could not hope to see everything that went on; it was a difficult and demanding job, usually, as here, performed out of goodwill by a devotee of the game.

On the question of the duty of care owed to the plaintiff the referee, founding his pleaded defence on observations of Lord Justice Sellers and Lord Justice Diplock in *Woodbridge v Sumner* [1963] 2 QB 43, 57, 67 and 68, had argued that while he owed a duty of care and skill, nothing short of reckless disregard of the plaintiff's safety would suffice to establish a breach of that duty.

The judge had adopted the test proposed by the plaintiff in reliance on observations of Sir John Donaldson, Master of the Rolls, in *Condon v East* [1968] that the duty owed was to exercise such degree of care as was appropriate in all the circumstances.

In the judgment of the court the judge was correct. The referee accepted that he owed a duty so that there was no issue whether any duty of care arose at all or whether any such duty was owed to the plaintiff.

The issue of policy, or of what was just and reasonable, did not accordingly fall for decision. The only question was what duty was owed. The referee feared that if the plaintiff's test were accepted the threshold of liability would be too low and those in the referee's position would be too vulnerable to suits by injured players.

The court did not accept that fear as well founded. The level of care required was that which was appropriate in all the circumstances, and the circumstances were of crucial importance.

Full account had to be taken of the factual context in which he exercised his functions and he explained the difficulty for a referee of spotting who was collapsing or the scrum, but that recent law changes in 1991 had given referees of colts matches the power they needed to stop scrums collapsing and that the referee in such games was under an active duty to do so.

In the expert's opinion the referee's responsibility was to ensure the players did not injure themselves or others, having what he had called "a preventive mantle"; that if the CTPE sequence were properly applied with evenly matched scrums, as in the present case, he would not expect as many as five to six collapsed scrums, and that if there were 25 that would indicate that the referee's standard of refereeing was below an acceptable standard.

His Lordship, referring to the judge's findings, said that the judge had been satisfied by the evidence that the scrums were repeatedly coming together in a rushed way and with excessive force; that those impacts were not likely cause of a large majority of scrums collapsing and that the number of impact collapses had been declining to high.

While declining to find precisely how many scrums collapsed in that way, he had accepted the body of that evidence at trial that there had been at least twenty scrum collapses.

Resolving dispute on creditor's petition

Allpou v UOC Corporation

Before Lord Justice Mummery and Lord Justice Hutton [Judgment December 17]

The Companies Court should not normally refuse to determine a dispute on a creditor's winding-up petition even where it related to the petition's locus standi, if the existence of the petition was not likely to cause substantial damage to the company.

The reason was a pragmatic one, the Companies Court being ill equipped to deal with the resolution of disputes of fact.

It was only a rule of practice and not one of law for the Companies Court to refuse to determine a dispute on the creditor's petition's locus standi and that rule was flexible especially when to go to another court would effectively deprive the petitioner of any remedy; see *In re Russian and English Bank* [1932] 1 Ch 663; [1932] 48 TLR 282 and *In re Claybridge Shipping Co SA* [1981] Com LR 107.

In *In re JN2 Ltd* it was said that it was all the more important that a petitioner whose status as a creditor was in dispute should not be permitted to present a petition and thereby interfere with dispositions by the company of its assets and risk damaging the financial standing of the company.

It was submitted by the petitioner before their Lordships that that case, although right at the time it was decided, should no longer be followed. It was rightly pointed out, his Lordship said, that significant procedural changes had occurred since 1977. The likelihood of damage being done to a company through the existence of such a petition was now very much reduced.

It was hard to see why the Companies Court should now normally refuse to determine a dispute, even if it did relate to the petitioner's locus standi, if the existence of the petition was not likely to cause substantial damage or inconvenience to the company.

However, their Lordships would not go so far as to say that the court could not take into account the factor that there was a genuine dispute as to the locus standi of the petitioner.

There might be evidence of damage or inconvenience caused to the company through the continued existence of the petition and the circumstances might indicate that the appropriate course was to require the dispute to be determined outside the petition.

In light of the authorities as affected by the current procedures of the Companies Court, the current position was: (a) a creditor's petition based on a disputed debt would normally be dismissed; (b) it would not be dismissed if the petitioner had a good arguable case that he was a creditor and the effect of dismissal would be to deprive the petitioner of a remedy or otherwise injustice would result or for some other sufficient reason the petition should proceed; (c) on a contributory's petition where the locus standi of the petitioner was disputed, the court would consider all the circumstances, including the likelihood of damage to the company if the petition was not dismissed. In determining whether to require the petitioner to seek the determination of the dispute outside the petition.

In the circumstances, the court being free to exercise its own discretion, the petition would not be dismissed notwithstanding the dispute as to the petitioner's locus standi but would be allowed to proceed so that the petitioner was not left without a remedy.

Solicitors: Palmer Cowers, Veale Wasbrough, Bristol.

THE COURT OF APPEAL (Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, Lord Justice Henry and Lord Justice Aldous) so held on November 21 when unanimously dismissed an appeal by the defendant landlord, the London Borough of Hounslow, from a decision of Mr Recorder Atchley at Brentford County Court on July 11, 1995 to award the plaintiff, Barbara Marie Berryman, damages of £24,374.44 for personal injury and consequential loss.

LORD JUSTICE HENRY said that the recorder applied too low a threshold of the foreseeability test. The breach of contract in question was that the lift was immobile when it was needed. An immobile lift was a life lift.

It was a necessary condition of liability on the part of the defendant that the plaintiff should have an enforceable right against the third party. It was not, however, necessary that the breach of statutory duty should give rise to a cause of action and be actionable by the plaintiff against the third party in a court of law.

Mr Hochhauser accepted the existence of the tort of inducing a breach of statutory duty. He submitted, however, that it was not every such inducement that was actionable.

In particular, he argued that the plaintiff had to show that the right that had been violated by the third party was a legal or equitable right which was capable of forming the basis of a cause of action, that is, capable of being sued upon as a tort; see *Associated British Ports v TGWU* [1989] ICR 557, 571B, although Lord Justice Neill was not there addressing the point to be decided in the present case.

Mr Hochhauser submitted that the right not to be unfairly dismissed, created by what was now section 94 of the consolidating Employment Rights Act 1996, was not capable of being sued upon as a tort in a court of law; it could only be the subject of a complaint to an industrial tribunal.

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No damages over broken lift

Berryman v Hounslow Borough Council

The tenant of an 18-storey block of flats who suffered back injury as a result of walking up four flights of stairs because the lift was unavailable was not entitled to damages for breach of the landlord's duty to keep the lift in working order.

Why court will not hear evidence about jury

Regina v Miah

It was a settled rule of long standing that an appellate court would not receive evidence from jurors about discussions or other matters that took place in the jury box or jury room concerning the cases in which they were acting.

Human Rights Law Report

Right not to incriminate oneself infringed

Saunders v United Kingdom (Case 43/1994/400572) Before R. Bernhardt, President and Judges Thor Vilhjálmsson, F. Gökçök, L.-E. Pettó, B. Walsh, Spielmann, J. de Maessene, V. Vališevski, S. Martens, E. Palm, R. Pekkarinen, A. N. Loizou, J. M. Morenilla, Sir John Freedland, L. Wildhaber, G. Mifsud Bonnici, J. Makarczyk, D. Goćhevc, B. Repik and P. Kirić.

Strasbourg

Correction

In *Armstrong and Others v British Coal Corporation* (The Times December 6) the firm of Thompson & Co, Sunderland, should be included among solicitors acting for the plaintiffs. British Coal were represented by Nabarro Nathanson, Sheffield.

Human Rights Law Report

Right not to incriminate oneself infringed

The Court noted that part of the transcript of his answers to the jury over a three-day period despite his objections.

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Improving economy brings fresh hope

J&P



GREECE

FOCUS

Michael Knipe on the task facing Costas Simitis and his Government: to reform the poorest state in the European Union

Improving economy brings fresh hope

Against a backdrop of blockades and strikes by a wide spectrum of the workforce, the Greek parliament is this week debating budget proposals that are generally perceived as a vital test of whether the country can overcome its chronic economic problems and raise its head in the European Community.

Since regaining power in 1993, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok) has made slow but marked progress in turning the economy around.

Inflation and unemployment have been dropping, economic growth is increasing and trade has been booming with Eastern Europe and the neighbouring Balkan states. The Government knows that it is vital that these trends continue if Greece is ever to achieve its much desired goal of joining the European Monetary Union. But the positive developments are overshadowed by the labour unrest. Groups ranging from farmworkers to diplomats are protesting at the austerity measures in the budget.

"Metaphorically," one diplomatic observer said, "Greece had moved from a red flashing light to a green flashing light so far as its economy is concerned, but everything now depends on how the Government deals with the strikes."

The confrontation is a stern first test for Costas Simitis, who suc-

ceeded the colourful Andreas Papandreu as Prime Minister 11 months ago.

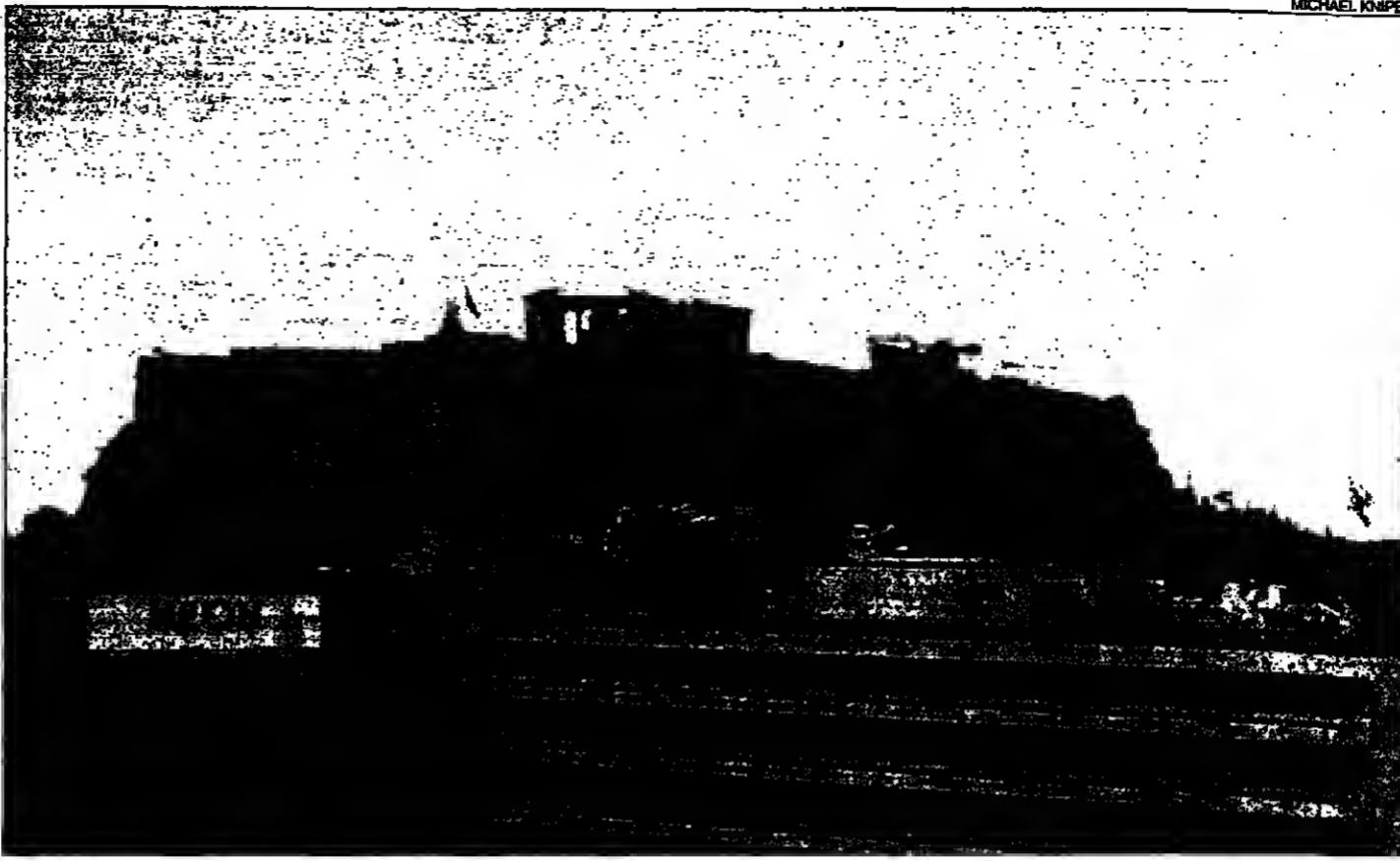
When Mr Simitis took over as Prime Minister, the ailing Mr Papandreu remained leader of Pasok and it was not until the party congress in June that Mr Simitis became party leader as well. To some international surprise, he consolidated his authority by leading Pasok to victory in a general election in September.

In sharp contrast to his charismatic predecessor, who won three landslide election victories with free-spending policies, Mr Simitis comes from the moderate social democratic wing of the party and it was evident from his previous stint as a minister that he favoured greater fiscal discipline.

He has a dry, academic manner and is regarded as a rather dull but worthy figure.

His priority is to rescue Greece from its plight as the poorest and economically sickest state in the EU. But his continuing hold on the leadership is likely to depend on whether he can get people back to work without emasculating the budget and, at the same time, retain the support of the populist left-wing faction of his party.

"It is a very ambitious and quite draconian budget," said its author, Yannis Papantoniou, the Minister for National Economy and Finance, in an interview in his office, as the labour unrest gathered strength.



Seeing the light: the sun silhouettes the Parthenon, built in the 5th century BC, as one of 10,000 new developments rises from a building site

The economy has moved from a red to a green flashing light

Unlike Great Britain, Greece wants to join the EMU

"For the first time we have adopted a severe stance on public expenditure, freezing subsidies, decreasing recruitment of staff and introducing a new wages structure that limits increases. It is always difficult to implement a tough budget. But it is vital that we do so. We cannot sacrifice the country's economic recovery to the demands of a minority."

His sentiments were echoed by Vasso Papandreu, a former EU Commissioner who is now Minister of Development in the Athens administration and responsible for expanding the Government's privatisation programme, speeding up the disbursement of EU grants and promoting domestic and foreign investment. She said: "We don't have any choice if we don't want to be left behind by our European partners."

Identification with the EU is a central tenet of Greek political thought. For years, as the poorest member of the union, the country has been on the receiving end of vast tranches of investment aid —

running at an estimated \$2 billion a year.

Under the current six-year grant programme of almost 15 billion ecus, a total of 10,000 infrastructure projects are under way, including a number of large ones. These include a new Athens international airport, a bridge across the Corinth Gulf and the Egnatia highway linking the Adriatic with Istanbul.

Only now, as the Government attempts to impose the disciplines required for membership of the European monetary union (EMU), are the benefits of membership being matched by financial consequences.

The country has so far failed to attain any of the criteria laid down at Maastricht for membership of the EMU and is the only member state excluded from the launch of EMU planned for 1999. But it is determined to join by the year 2001. Failure to do so might result in its membership having to wait until the further enlargement of the union with the arrival of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic,

said Mr Papantoniou — and that, he claimed, would effectively mean Greece losing the advantages of 20 years' membership.

Even amid the protest strikes, the Greeks remain fervent Europeans. "Everybody assumes that the ecu will be better than the drachma," said Thanos Veremis, director of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy. There was a fear among Greeks, he said, of drifting out of Europe. Greeks perceived themselves as being in a "bad neighbourhood" on the periphery and the only member state with no geographic border with the rest of the union. As a result, they saw membership very clearly in terms of European security. "The costs of being in the EU are becoming apparent and this may rock the boat," he said, "but it will not capsize it."

"Unlike Britain, Greece actually wants to participate in the EMU," said Alexos Papadopoulos, the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration, "so all our policies are directed towards this main goal."

Mr Papadopoulos is charged with restructuring the Government's bloated administration and is in the process of attempting to reduce the number of local government authorities from 6,000 to 1,200. Under another ambitious administrative reform, only one new public employee may be hired for every five who leave.

Miltiades Evert, the leader of the opposition New Democratic Party, bemoans the fact that, during the past 15 years, the country's economy has increased by only half the EU average. "Instead of closing the distance, we've increased it. What

ELGIN MARBLES

THE GREEK Government is intensifying its longstanding efforts to repossess the Elgin marbles from the British Museum. Evangelos Venizelos, the Minister of Culture, said he was encouraged by the British Government's action of returning the Stone of Scone to Scotland.

He has put in a fresh request for the return of the marbles to the British ambassador in Athens and to the Heritage Ministry in London. If necessary, he intends to pursue the matter through political and legal procedures involving Unesco, the EU and the Council of Europe.

The marbles, consisting of friezes and figures from the Parthenon, were removed, and saved from probable destruction, by the seventh Earl of Elgin, in 1803, with permission from the local Ottoman administration and sold to the British Museum.

Dating from between 467 and 432 BC, the friezes and figures are regarded as the best surviving examples of the work of Phidias.

is needed is to increase free-market enterprise, not increase taxation."

In the wake of the election, however, the New Democrats are in disarray and, in its latest social-democrat guise, Pasok has stolen much of its appeal among the business community.

Both Government and Opposition politicians point to the fact that Greece has defence demands because of the perceived threat from neighbouring Turkey that no other EU state faces. "We have a problem of national security," says Mr Papadopoulos. "In the other European states defence spending amounts to 1.72 per cent of GNP, while for us the figure is 7 per cent. This is little understood by our European partners."

The most promising aspect on the horizon for Greece is its developing role as the EU's link with the neighbouring Balkan states as they emerge from their years of communism. Since 1990, exports to the other Balkan countries have increased by an estimated 150 per cent.

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Tough budget rules unions

John Carr on how the Greek Finance Minister is trying to cater to the needs of his Socialist party yet still meet the demands of the Maastricht criteria

"In Greece it is not enough to wind your watch. To get it to work, you must also push the hands round with your finger."

This Aristophanean dictum, attributed to ex-President Constantine Karamanlis, the architect of Greece's European Union membership, well describes the purpose of the country's 1997 budget. The next few years will see a determined effort to keep this resource-poor nation of ten million people on the road to a vision of Europe-wide wellbeing.

The Maastricht treaty has already begun to change the way the traditionally free-wheeling Greeks live and work. But old Mediterranean habits die hard, and the Greeks have never liked fingers being applied to them.

Yannos Papanioliou, the National Economy Minister, has the unenviable task of trying to chart the Maastricht course. He has remained famously impervious to the threats of the ruling Pasok party's left wing, and the unions it controls.

will get rises of no more than 2 per cent. State revenue is expected to reach 14.8 trillion drachmas, against an expected 14.6 trillion for this year. Most of the rise is to be achieved by slashing tax benefits and raising at least a trillion more drachmas in direct tax revenue.

The dizzying rise of public spending is going to be slowed somewhat, with that for next year budgeted at 13.2 trillion drachmas, or 6.2 per cent over this year. The rise for this year over last was 13.1 per cent. Generally, the aim is for public-sector savings of up to 300 billion drachmas, and here is where the cynical smiles come in.

"Revenue might show fatigue," is how a report on the Greek economic outlook published by a major American bank delicately puts it, "and the Government might be forced to take corrective measures in the summer". There seems little doubt that the Government will make a determined effort to whittle down its budget deficit to or near 4.2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), against the present 7.6 per cent.

The Maastricht convergence programme, designed to put the drachma in a position to drop neatly into the place reserved for it in the European single currency by 2001, provides for keeping the GDP growth rate well above 3 per cent and pumping the budget primary surplus up to 6.1 per cent (against 4.1 per cent now). That may be the easy bit.

More daunting are the Maastricht imperatives to keep on being ruthless with inflation (1999 target: 3.3 per cent), squeezing real short-term interest rates to 6.2 per cent from their present 12.5 per cent and tackling the massive 35 trillion drachma public debt, melting it from 110 per cent of GDP to 103 per cent.

It is a task that could tax even Mr Papanioliou's smiling powers.



Farmers in Larissa block the Athens highway in protest at the Government's austerity measures

ECONOMY
6 Pensioners will get rises of no more than 2 per cent

A blessing in disguise

Last month's collapse of Delta Securities, a small brokerage firm, prompted a share dealing scandal that rocked the Athens Stock Exchange (ASE), but it may have been a blessing in disguise for the Greek stock market.

Yannos Papanioliou, the National Economy Minister, has said: "The Athens Stock Exchange will come out stronger from its recent crisis, which will be seen eventually as a crisis of cleansing and modernisation." The ASE, founded in 1876, is the sole regulated capital market where shares of listed Greek companies and government and corporate bonds are traded. The exchange plans to bring Greece's active bond market, presently traded over-the-counter, to the bourse next year.

STOCK EXCHANGE

232 listed companies. The Greek market's fundamentals remain attractive for investors, with a current price/earnings multiple of only 10 times for 1997. The ASE general index, which comprises 60 leading companies, has now recovered to above the 900 level and prospects remain bright as long as structural and economic reforms are implemented. The ASE's regulatory framework has been modified, improving regulation, operation and transparency. From the latter part of 1995, the ASE, under the presidency of Dr Manolis Xanthakis, entered a process of institutional changes, with the aim of modernising the capital market and attracting foreign investors. Dr Xanthakis has been

instrumental in attracting much-needed overseas investment with successful investor roadshows in London, Boston and New York.

Dr Xanthakis said: "The Greek market has huge potential, because it is among the cheapest markets on fundamentals as well as offering a very attractive dividend policy." The ASE received a filip from last year's brokerage commission deregulation, reducing fees, while legal changes brought the market in line with EU directives concerning investment services and capital adequacy, as well as increasing transparency and liquidity. The market's development and transparency will be further boosted by a partial privatisation programme and the funding from the EU for a string of major infrastructure projects.

PHILIP PANGALOS

Financiers battle against inflation

The Bank of Greece is helping to cool the economy's inbuilt tendency to overheat

Vast and wood-panelled, the office of the Governor of the Bank of Greece, Loukas Papadimos, is a quiet, comfortable place. He needs the quiet because his days are filled with brewing the proper policy mix which, after much trial and error, can reasonably be expected to cool down an economy with an inbuilt tendency to overheat.

His own equable and soft-spoken character could also be a vital ingredient in getting a Socialist government to go along with his recommendations. "There are no fundamental differences between the bank and the Government on basic policy," he says. Which is his way of saying that time to time about the central bank's relentlessly tight money policies, it knows it cannot offer anything better. Success in the battle against inflation is Mr Papadimos's biggest showpiece.

In the past two years, inflation has been pressed down from 11.1 per cent to 7.7 per cent (a consecutive rise for a few months last spring was blamed on an unavoidable spurt in oil and farm produce prices). "Our priority is to work out a policy that will bring inflation down at least three percentage points through the year," he says. "If rates have to rise temporarily as a result, then it will be a price worth paying."

Since 1994 the Bank of Greece has been officially independent of the Greek state. This means that its governor can no longer (theoretically) be subject to political pressures. It also indicates that the Government's target of 4.5 per cent inflation by the end of 1997 has a reasonable chance of being achieved. Mr Papadimos's tenure is characterised by an emphasis on exchange-rate manipulation rather than money and credit controls to keep the drachma hard and ward off foreign speculative tentacles. Exporters and tour operators are unhappy, but the governor is sticking to his guns. A major

objective for 1996 has been to stabilise the drachma against a basket of European currencies. But if quiet, confident conservatism reigns in the Bank of Greece, the same cannot be said of the commercial banking sector. For a start, as of January 1997 commercial banks are going to have to start paying more taxes. The basic corporate tax on profits rises from 35 to 40 per cent while, for the first time, they will be taxed on bonds and derivatives profits at 7.5 per cent. Some government officials say it is high time.

In the space of a year, banks have profited from sales of popular one-year treasury bills, 6 trillion drachmas' worth of which were sold this year, against 5.8 trillion last year. Foreign exchange deposits in the same period soared from 4.7 trillion drachmas to 5.2 trillion. Loans to the private sector this year will total 9.1 trillion drachmas, against 7.5 trillion last year. The 1997 projection is for 10.5 trillion. And in the space of a year, prime rates have followed deposit and interbank rates on a downward course, while consumer loan exposure has skyrocketed. All these multiplying trillions have sharpened competition beyond what was imaginable when Greek banking reforms got under way in 1987.

The architect of those reforms, former corporate lawyer Theodore Karatzas, is now the governor of the National Bank of Greece, the country's biggest commercial bank. He and other bankers believe that the state banking sector will consist eventually of two or three big banks, and an equal number of large private banks. Who survives will depend on innovations, such as the penetration of the emerging Balkan markets by such institutions as the Commercial Bank of Greece and Ionian Bank.

If anything, the realignments in the banking sector will reduce costs and rates and help the national effort to cool down the economy.

JOHN CARR

FINANCES
6 In two years, inflation has dropped by 3.4 per cent

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THEATRE 1
Jessica Lange prepares for her West End debut in the 'inexhaustible' role of *Blanche DuBois*



THEATRE 2
 ... while, on Broadway, Joel Grey wows the crowds in the Kander and Ebb musical *Chicago*

THE TIMES
ARTS



THEATRE 3
 A miniature Sondheim musical, *Marry Me A Little*, comes to the London fringe



TOMORROW
 Has Alan Parker succeeded in turning *Evita* into a great film? Read Geoff Brown's view

THEATRE: A double Oscar winner hits the West End in a modern classic; plus reviews from New York and London

Looking for the right home in Tennessee

Few theatrical debuts in recent years seemed as brave as that by Jessica Lange on Broadway in 1992. In a season in which movie stars were returning to the stage en masse — Glenn Close, Gene Hackman and Richard Dreyfuss in *Death and the Maiden*, Alan Alda in Neil Simon's *Jake's Women* — Lange was making her New York professional stage debut as Blanche DuBois in Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Not bad for someone whose theatrical CV up to then consisted of early work during her expatriate period in France and a summer stock production in North Carolina of an original play whose name she no longer remembers.

Fourteen years as partner to the pre-eminent American dramatist Sam Shepard, however, presumably counts for something: although Lange says the couple do not talk theatre — "our lives are so filled up with children and other things that that kind of stuff within the home takes precedence" — she clearly recognises quality when she finds it. (Lange has three children, two by Shepard and an older daughter by her previous companion, Mikhail Baryshnikov.)

In the event, director Gregory Mosher's *Streetcar* revival, with Alec Baldwin as Blanche's destroyer, Stanley, did not exactly business for six months. On the strength of those names, Amy Madigan's Stella included, how could it not? It was bolstered by a Tony Award nomination for Baldwin and a steamy ad campaign promising an evening of sweaty sex that Williams's tragedy is hardly about. But along with the crowds came a cache of disappointed (and some damning) reviews alongside — on Lange's part, at least — of unfinished business.

That is why the two-time Oscar-winner, now 47, accepted Peter Hall's offer to tackle the part anew in the West End, having followed the Broadway run with a separate

Will London prove a happier hunting ground for Jessica Lange in her third shot at Blanche DuBois? Matt Wolf reports

CBS television version that again featured Baldwin (with Diane Lane and John Goodman as Stella and Mitch). At a point when most performers would have filed away their reviews and moved on, Lange is preparing a third *Blanche*, suggesting in the process a devotion to the role comparable on this side of the Atlantic to Kenneth Branagh's pursuit of *Hamlet*.

"This character is pretty inexhaustible," Lange says. "I never tire of the discovery of Blanche. I just knew with a different cast [Toby Stephens and Imogen Stubbs as Stanley and Stella] and a different director, it was going to have a whole separate life from the other two I had done before, and it does. I haven't given one thought to the run we did in New York."

Lange is not keen to dwell on the Broadway engagement. "What scared me about that experience was that it wasn't the right combination, and had I been more experienced, I would have understood it wasn't right." But she defends a decision about which "I suppose you could say I was foolhardy, but I never thought of it like that. Blanche was a part I really loved and thought I could play and bring something to, and I felt that if I was going to do theatre, I wanted to do something that meant something to me."

The headlines about movie stars invading Broadway no doubt had their own damaging effect. "I think that worked against all of us. It's like when you live in a small town

and you see a provincial snobbery based on nothing — that's how I feel about the New York theatre world; they have this pretentious snobbery when, I mean, I can barely sit through most Broadway plays. But they're commercial. It's the same thing with films — they're commercial but they're nothing. I can sit through and they make \$150 million.

"The bottom line is I think I'm just out of the loop. What I like, other people don't like, and what other people flock to, I find unbearable."

In any case, Lange became a film star more by circumstance than conscious choice, and is quick to forestall any idea that theatre is something to which she might be seen to be condescending. "It wasn't that, back in acting class in the 1970s, I said to myself, well, I'm going to do movies; I'm not going to do theatre," says the actress, who began her screen career in King Kong's furry paws before establishing her heavyweight credentials in 1982 with back-to-back performances in *Tootsie* and *Frances*, the latter of which introduced her to costar Shepard.

Lange says: "You kind of get taken along the path destined for you. I started getting film roles, and it just became more and more that it was never a decision that I wanted to be a film actor as opposed to a theatre actor; it was just the work that came my way."

The problem, of course, is that once launched, screen careers have to be maintained — so that even if you

want to do theatre, that may not be the wish of the numerous business interests that surround you.

"The first time I did *Blanche*, nobody wanted me to do it; the second time," Lange laughs, "nobody really wanted me to do it. But nobody has ever made decisions for me. I've been influenced sometimes against my better judgment to do something I felt strongly I shouldn't do. I let myself get talked into it because of those very reasons — it's commercial, it's money — and it has always been a mistake."

She praises the "much healthier attitude to acting in Britain. In America, because of the money involved and because of the machinery of Hollywood, it is really an unhealthy environment for actors. The rewards are actually very destructive because they are so out of proportion to the talent and it is all extremely seductive. If people are going to get \$15 or \$20 million to do some bad part in some bad movie, they're going to take that instead of making a couple of hundred dollars a week rehearsing a play; it has to do with the integrity of the individuals."

Beyond *Blanche*, Lange cites the *Princess in Sweet Bird of Youth* and O'Neill's *Mary Tyrone* as roles she would like to do on stage, though she turned down a chance at Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, claiming she was too old to play any of them. Theatre work with Shepard remains an unfulfilled hope. "If there were ever a part [for me] in his plays, I would do it, and I would love to be directed by Sam on stage."

"I know the work I did on stage in New York was good, and I also know when I've been lazy. With a part like *Blanche*, you can only be honest with it. I can't create a performance; it either feels true or it doesn't, and this is such an emotional part, it has always felt true to me when I've done it."



Jessica Lange: "What I like, other people don't like, and what other people flock to, I find unbearable"

Side by sides by Sondheim

THE origin of this 65-minute Sondheim musical is curious. Craig Lucas, an actor in the original chorus of *Sweeney Todd*, heard that a number of the composer's songs languished in a musical limbo, either because they had been dropped from shows on Broadway or because they belonged to shows that had never finished the journey.

Lucas, with the late Norman René as director, assembled some of these escapades into an order suggesting a story line and cast it for a man and a woman, in two New York apartments, asking, in the words of the opening song: "What can you do with a Saturday night, if you're single?"

"What you can do, of course, is dream; and in a musical sing your dreams; which is what Clive Carter and Rebecca Front proceed to do, with

only about as many unsung words between the numbers as could be counted on a single hand.

Until just towards the end, and then provoked by a song that awkwardly alters the mood, the construction works remarkably well, helped by a staging device familiar from the Ayckbourn oeuvre which shows the two apartments as one. Carter and Front therefore open the same fridge, sit on the same creamy sofa, switch channels on the same television set — but in different parts of town.

One of Sondheim's notable gifts, possibly unique to him, is an ability to show the thoughts of his characters changing as they sing. They hesitate, they contradict what they have just sung. Don't, they imply, take me quite as seriously as you and I thought

I was being. If all this were not being sung you would say they were humming and hawing.

So there the two of them are, single on a Saturday night, wishing they were not. Along with her careful smile, Front's eyebrows tilt up at the middle, giving her a brave, tough-tongued expression. She sings the title song, dropped from *Company* but now (apparently because of this show) back in that score. She also sings one of the few roaring numbers, *Can That Boy Fear?*, a rhetorical question depending

for its full effect on the American broadening of the fourth syllable.

Carter also shows physicality — the restlessness, the outbursts of tart wit — and both sing with clarity and charm. When Front reaches the closing phrase of *There Won't Be Trumpets* she finds a note as pure and faint as a silver trumpet on the very edge of hearing.

Clive Paget directs on the admirable flexible stage of this theatre and Rowland Lee accompanies on the piano.

Tuned into our sceptical times

Benedict Nightingale enjoys a fine Broadway revival of Kander and Ebb's courtroom musical, *Chicago*

through me, walk right by me, and never know I'm there". It is as if a post-socialist Brecht were to set *The Threepenny Opera* in what's nominally the 1930s but, by inference, the 1990s. And the message is unmistakable: the law-and-order system is another branch of showbiz.

I left the Richard Rodgers Theatre feeling it would make an ideal counter-Christmas show for Sam Mendes's *Donmar*, and lo and behold, I returned home to hear rumours that he may indeed stage it there before long. Certainly, a prime strength of

Walter Bobbie's fine production is a simplicity seldom seen on Broadway. Mostly, the stage is filled with a bank of musicians, principally brass players, leaving a thinish shell on which men and women in all-black stockings, jackets, shorts, bras, white-er, sway and swirl in dances choreographed by Reinking in the manner of the late, great Bob Fosse. Imagine an elegant entertainment from some slick but sleazy corner of Hades, and you have the evening's sinister glamour.

If that's Broadway at its best, *Present Laughter* at the

Walter Kerr shows it at its overblown worst. Up goes a posh 18th-century frontage to reveal a living room to make the builders of Blenheim feel penny-pinching. It is the home of Noel Coward's Garry Essendine, matinee idol and egomaniac, whose world is in emotional turmoil as he prepares to leave for a tour in what the cast's sometimes suspect British accents insist on rechristening "Efrich".

Frank Langella, who plays him, is a fine, funny actor but, like others in the company, too often opts for the camp, broad gesture and too obviously nudges and rickles the audience and its armchairs. And not content with coarsening Coward, the director, the young and fashionable Scott Elliott, brings his sexual subtexts spuriously to the surface. Garry's would-be mistresses strip to their underwear and beyond, while the Angry Young Man who haunts him gives him the full-frontal treatment. The Master would have winced and, had he been less well bred, thrown up.

RSC
 ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
 Presented by ALLIED DOMESTIC

'Niamh Cusack's graceful Rosalind... Liam Cunningham is a striking Orlando'
 Observer

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 Daily Telegraph

As You Like It
 by William Shakespeare

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 Box Office 0171 638 8891

Beyond the cringe
 Joey & Gina's Wedding
 Café Royal

JEREMY KINGSTON

IF YOU go to the Café Royal for *Joey and Gina's Wedding*, do not expect a Café Royal wedding. Although invitation prices start at £36.50, the food is derisory, the drink is extra and the celebrations take place not in the classy West End but at "Frankie's Castle" — resolutely in the East End.

All weddings have a performative power — enough to turn the simple words "I do" into the profoundest of actions — so why not marry this to a piece of theatre? The audience become guests, while the cast act as the ghastly families and hosts. The drama should be there on a (paper) plate.

Unfortunately, by caricaturing everything that can go wrong, writer Jay Leggett has robbed the rite of its potent mix of solemnity and social comedy. As we all know, with a congregation on emotional alert, the subtlest lapses always loom large; but to travesty the entire proceedings dissipates the intensity and looks like a failure to observe what really goes on.

The drunken Irish priest's homily on the miseries of married life is familiarly ex-cruciating, as is the breaking out of longstanding feuds within the social-climbing family of the bride (Maria D'Elia) and the Chicago-Italian family of the groom (Glenn Wrage). But these could have been done with a little more surreptitious truth. We should be watching from

the corners of our eyes, not from the front stalls.

The tuneless songs of various wellwishers are little better than karaoke humour, and the jealousies and fights become irritating interruptions. Even the best man's speech is squandered, when it should have been a chance to create a context, add some needed depth of character and tell some proper jokes. The best entertainment is the honest showmanship of Frankie, the impresario and Elvis imitator (James Doherty), and the juggling of Miles (Mat Ricardo).

Audience involvement is limited to the occasional hokey-cokey. The cast do buttonhole the guests — and the admirably underdressed Angelica Leigh (Hannah Waddingham) does rather more — but their gambits are mostly bectoring. With tableau relentlessly following tableau, there is little scope for imaginative vamping.

The show is designed as the perfect office-party cringe-binge, where nobody can avoid participating and even Miss Muffet from accounts would feel a spoilsport to demur.

Sorry.

JIM MCCUE

'PURE, UNADULTERATED PLEASURE' THE TIMES

CHÉRUBIN
 MASSENET
 Conducted by John Eliot Gardiner

14 January
 7.30pm
 10 January
 8pm

ROYAL OPERA
 ROYAL OPERA HOUSE
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POP The Pretenders' excursion to church can only be counted as a modified blessing



JAZZ The life and music of Billie Holiday are recalled, perhaps too sweetly, in Lady Sings the Blues

THE TIMES ARTS



CHOICE 1 William Christie brings Rameau's Les Fêtes d'Hébé to London



CHOICE 2 Bristol's American season opens with Arthur Miller's The Last Yankee

POP AND JAZZ: Chrissie Hynde fails to convince; Tracey's birthday; remembering Lady Day

Pretender, or faking?

The year has started late with Jack Frost nipping at the extremities. The band's rewriting of its back pages in this recent setting was only partially successful. Some of the Pretenders' loud and proud rock landmarks simply will not politely allow their gutsy electric guitar parts to be transplanted with sedate strings. In her mid-forties, Hynde remains the epitome of mature rock rebellion, and an awkward focal point for such denature endeavours. Back on the Chain Gang and Brass in Pocket were among those that just did not want to sit still for their wash and brush up. But there has always been a sentimental heart beneath Hynde's rock 'n' roll swagger and the lights on the tree really shone on the more romantic pieces such as Kid, the seasonal 2000 Miles and a welcome revival of Birds of Paradise from the 1981 Pretenders II album. Chrissie then sent us on our way with a rendition of Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas: even more of a softy than we thought.



PAUL SEXTON Big softy: time seems to have mellowed Chrissie Hynde, but eviscerated her music

Free score years and ten Stan Tracey

In 1973, the Park Lane Group presented the first jazz concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, featuring Stan Tracey. So it was fitting that the same organisation should present the same musician at the same venue in a special concert to mark his seventieth birthday. Such occasions can all too easily turn into schmaltzy schlock: fortunately, Tracey is incapable of producing anything but the hard-edged, inventive jazz he has been composing and playing since 1944. Like the senior of his two main influences, Duke Ellington (the other being Thelonious Monk), Tracey the composer also "plays" his various bands, from duos and trios right up to 15-piece orchestras. The concert showcased these various bands in logical sequence, beginning with Tracey plus rhythm section (drummer son Clark and bassist Andy Cleynert), and culminating in a rousing selection from The Genesis Suite with full orchestra. The opening trio selection was an original blues, Panama Red, a typically quirky, percussive Tracey tune that enabled him to get into his stride immediately with his familiar chunky soloing style. In both this and the following quartet pieces, which initially featured trumpeter Gerard Presencer and tenor player Bobby Whittis, Tracey confirmed his reputation as a world-class improviser, cutting unpredictable paths through the tunes' changes which turned out to be far the most scenic routes. The octet and septet segments of the evening inevitably shifted the spotlight to Tracey the composer, but the playing of regular collaborators such as saxophonists Don Weller and Peter King as well as the younger generation (represented by saxophonists Andy Panayi, Mornington Lockett and Julian Arguelles) ensured that no momentum was lost. In the concluding big-band section, youthful prowess was heavily and tellingly featured, ending the concert with not only an overt tribute to Tracey's peerless compositional skills, but also an implied one to his influence on the entire British jazz scene.

Home for the Holiday Lady Sings the Blues Birmingham

PRESENTING a show built around the songs of Billie Holiday is a daunting prospect for any singer, but Val Wiseman has successfully toured her package for almost nine years. During that time there have been slight changes to the band and the routines, and her appearance on home turf at Ronnie Scott's marked just such a moment of renewal. Several new songs have been added, many rescued from Holiday's lesser-known recordings and Alan Barnes has recently joined the backing band on tenor sax and clarinet. Compered and led by the unflappable Digby Fairweather on cornet, the show offers a relaxed tour through Holiday's career, even if it is long on sentiment and short on heartache. Few singers can encapsulate the pain and anguish of Holiday's last years, but Wiseman was nevertheless at her best when tackling the measured ballads of the 1950s, notably You Are Mine and Lover Man, with Barnes taking the tenor solo. In these songs, the lyrics gave Wiseman the chance to extract more meaning - after all, plenty of Holiday's 1930s discs were unmemorable frothy songs save for the edge in her voice and the stellar accompanists. Teddy Wilson recruited to back her, Wiseman's band is, in British terms, every bit as stellar as many of Wilson's little groups, but it, like Wiseman, fared better on the 1950s material. The 1930s songs raised the question of authenticity. Just how closely should such a show emulate the style of the period? Each member of the band solved the problem differently and the most satisfying solo playing came from trombonist Roy Williams, confident enough to be himself in all surroundings and turning in a succession of ever more accomplished vignettes. His unaccompanied choruses and duos with guitarist Jim Douglas were as brilliant as in both men's heyday with Alex Welsh a quarter of a century ago. It was a shame that Barnes was not allowed the occasional outing on alto, and Williams and Douglas apart on the older material, the others seemed reluctant to be themselves.

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A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Mazzy

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Jenny Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

CINEMA GUIDE

David Brown's assessment of films in London and elsewhere

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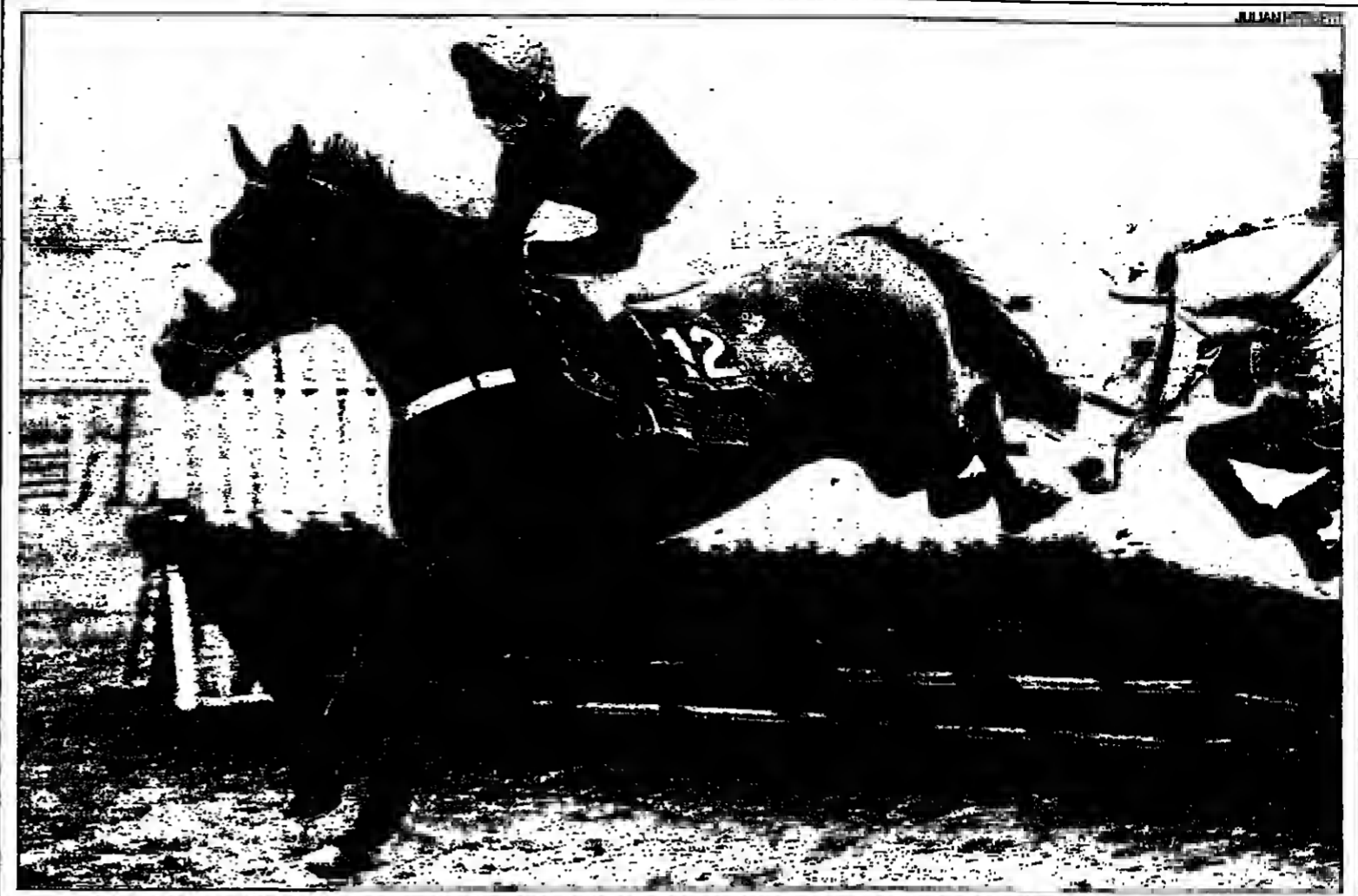
the lure of the large life

Lack of seasonal cheer as BHB strives for unity

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

AN UNEASY stand-off — between those who run racing and others who think they could do the job better — emerged yesterday at the equivalent of the sport's annual general meeting in London. Christmas is only a week away but there was precious little goodwill in the air as representatives of the industry's diverse factions gathered for the British Horseracing Board (BHB) industry committee for the Royal Geographical Society.

scathed from the two-hour meeting, the silent majority convinced. A complaint about "lack of leadership," raised by Lady Burnham, president of the ROA, during the question and answer session, found an echo afterwards with several people. Not surprisingly, given the uproar which followed last month's Budget disappointment, the BHB leadership was well prepared for its critics yesterday and set a trap which their opponents walked into obligingly.



Rough Quest makes light of a return to the smaller obstacles by winning the Lympe Novices' Hurdle at Folkestone yesterday

Rough Quest makes smooth return

By JULIAN MUSCAT

ROUGH QUEST is the best advertisement the Grand National could wish for. It smacked of pathsos to see him contest the Lympe Novices' Hurdle at Folkestone yesterday, but the ten-year-old radiated class as he strode to a resounding victory.

Day. This contest was far from ideal but the horse took it in his stride, in the process serving notice that One Man will have to be at his very best in the Kempton feature. Ladbrokes responded by trimming Rough Quest to 5-1, from a point longer.

David's exact comments, "Fitzgerald later related, but he said: 'That's the second time you've done it to me on the same horse'."

It is a long way from Becher's Brook to this run-of-the-mill venue. No racecourse distils the brave quite like Aintree, but Rough Quest must have sensed the unexpected from the paddock antics of his unraced opponents. As Pett Lad dropped his rider and Over The Water threatened to start his race there and then, Rough Quest surveyed the scene with his detachment. He had seen all this — and plenty more.

12.30 D'Neen 2.00 Stop The Waller 1.00 Around The Gate 2.30 Glowing Path 1.30 General Tonic 3.00 SOLBA (nap) 3.30 Scoring Pedigree

12.30 MAESTEN NOVICES SELLING HURDLE. (22,000: 2m 10) (10 runners) 101-102 ADMIRAL'S GUEST 20 (W Robertson) W Day 4-11-5... R Farnley 75

1.00 ST HELENS FORD NOVICES CHASE (24,350: 2m 41 110yd) (8 runners) 201 215-12 ANZIO THE GALE 35 (C.P.R.) (W Whaley) G Gando 5-11-5... R McElroy 87

1.30 ASTURRY WHEN HANDICAP HURDLE (24,765: 3m) (7 runners) 301 311-4 SUN SURFER 16 (G.S.) (S Sakai) J Foster 6-12-0... S Wynne 80

COURSE SPECIALISTS TRAINERS Wins Runs % Jockeys Wins % % 1. G. Moore 6 17 28.6 R. Beatty 2 7 28.6

2.00 CHALICE RICHARDS MALT WHISKY HANDICAP CHASE (24,163: 4m 10) (10 runners) 401 214-66 STOP THE WALLER 18 (G.S.) (S Robertson) J Foster 7-11-0... M R Thompson 87

2.30 RED COAT CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22,640: 2m 10) (10 runners) 501 502-04 NEVER SO BLUE 37 (P.J.) (P Buckley) P Beatty 5-11-0... D J Kenworthy 87

3.00 CLYMO HANDICAP CHASE (24,065: 2m 4 110yd) (9 runners) 601 602-11 FOGS BROADWAY 25 (G.S.) (S Robertson) G Gando 5-11-5... A P McEay 87

3.30 YELLOW COLLAR INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (21,658: 2m 10) (14 runners) 1 100-4 MINDA SA (D.J.) (R Robertson) K Baris 5-11-1... R Denny 87

FORM FOCUS FOALS ERWARD Head had been led by 7-year-old racing star at Naheen (2m 5f, good to soft)

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS Folkestone Going: good to soft 12.30 (2m 11 110yd) 1. ANZIO THE GALE (C.P.R.) (W Whaley) G Gando 5-11-5...

2.00 CHALICE RICHARDS MALT WHISKY HANDICAP CHASE (24,163: 4m 10) (10 runners) 401 214-66 STOP THE WALLER 18 (G.S.) (S Robertson) J Foster 7-11-0...

2.30 RED COAT CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22,640: 2m 10) (10 runners) 501 502-04 NEVER SO BLUE 37 (P.J.) (P Buckley) P Beatty 5-11-0...

3.00 CLYMO HANDICAP CHASE (24,065: 2m 4 110yd) (9 runners) 601 602-11 FOGS BROADWAY 25 (G.S.) (S Robertson) G Gando 5-11-5...

3.30 YELLOW COLLAR INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (21,658: 2m 10) (14 runners) 1 100-4 MINDA SA (D.J.) (R Robertson) K Baris 5-11-1...

EXETER THUNDERER 12.40 Peter Monaghan, 1.10 Kimenicky, 1.40 Fabio Molto, 2.10 Khalid, 2.40 Shining Light, 3.40 Royal Ruler.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) SIS 12.40 GEMINI RADICAL CLAIRING HURDLE (22,102: 2m 20) (9 runners)

1.40 RENFRETTA KNIGHT 50TH BIRTHDAY NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (23,129: 2m 20) (11 runners) 1 100-2 SUPREME REVEREND 11 (R.S.) (J O'Han) 7-11-0...

2.10 SCOTTISH EQUITABLE/JOCKEYS ASSOCIATION HANDICAP HURDLE (23,590: 2m) (7 runners) 1 100-1 SLEW MAM 50 (R.S.) (P Beatty) 5-11-0...

2.40 EDMONDROE HANDICAP CHASE (24,867: 2m 11 110yd) (7) 1 100-4 OATS PRIDE 25 (G.S.) (S Robertson) G Gando 5-11-5...

GATTERICK THUNDERER 12.50 Amber Valley, 1.20 Sudden Spin, 1.50 Dorin Castle, 2.20 Funetto, 2.50 The Toastie, 3.20 Maple Bay.

GOING: GOOD SIS 12.50 GLEBE NOVICES CHASE (23,043: 2m) (6 runners) 1 100-1 MURRAYMAN 25 (F.G.) (M Hammond) 6-11-5...

1.50 GOOD LUCK PAL ALSTER NOVICES CHASE (23,178: 2m 11 110yd) (7) 1 100-4 BANGOR LAD 10 (D.J.) (R Robertson) K Baris 5-11-1...

2.20 RAFFAYARD HOUSE SELLING HURDLE (21,943: 2m 30) (11) 1 100-4 ANZIO THE GALE 35 (C.P.R.) (W Whaley) G Gando 5-11-5...

2.50 BOVILLE HANDICAP CHASE (22,785: 2m 30) (7) 1 100-2 THE TONSTER 9 (G.S.) (S Robertson) G Gando 5-11-5...

3.20 HUTTON WANDESBLEY NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (22,138: 2m) (14) 1 100-1 LAST TRY 25 (G.S.) (S Robertson) G Gando 5-11-5...

COURSE SPECIALISTS TRAINERS: A. Stead, 5 winners from 11 runners, 45.5%, 4 Quins, 6 from 25, 24.0%, 1 Flycatcher, 11 from 53, 20.7%, 1 Lingo, 6 from 28, 21.4%

COURSE SPECIALISTS TRAINERS: A. Stead, 5 winners from 11 runners, 45.5%, 4 Quins, 6 from 25, 24.0%

COURSE SPECIALISTS TRAINERS: A. Stead, 5 winners from 11 runners, 45.5%, 4 Quins, 6 from 25, 24.0%

COURSE SPECIALISTS TRAINERS: A. Stead, 5 winners from 11 runners, 45.5%, 4 Quins, 6 from 25, 24.0%

RACELINE 0930 1681 101 201 BANGOR EXETER CATTERICK 103 202 203 FULL RESULTS SERVICE 108

MARSTON WARREN MARSTON will be replaced by Norman Williamson aboard Nahden when the Jenny Farnham-trained Sun Alliance winner makes his re-appearance at Bangor today, and Williamson will keep the ride for the King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day.

MUSSELBURGH Going: firm, good to firm in places 12.20 (2m 4 110yd) 1. Inverness Wistley 11 (R.S.) (P Beatty) 5-11-0...

3.10 HOECHST ROUSSEL PANACUR EIF MARES ONLY NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (24,632: 2m 30) (11) 1 100-1 GAY FINE 25 (G.S.) (S Robertson) G Gando 5-11-5...

COURSE SPECIALISTS TRAINERS: A. Stead, 5 winners from 11 runners, 45.5%, 4 Quins, 6 from 25, 24.0%

COURSE SPECIALISTS TRAINERS: A. Stead, 5 winners from 11 runners, 45.5%, 4 Quins, 6 from 25, 24.0%

Manchester

FOOTBALL

Southampton seek 'feel-good' factor in Coca-Cola Cup

By Russell Kempson

SOUTHAMPTON and West Ham United have failed to win any of their past six league matches...

player. Injury has forced him to miss Southampton's past four matches...

reproduce it against Southampton. West Ham face a similarly awkward task against Stockport at Edgeley Park...

Since the 6-3 victory against Manchester United in October, and a subsequent 1-1 draw with Sheffield Wednesday...



Le Tissier: fitness test

Robson has high hopes for Kinder

BRYAN ROBSON, the manager of Middlesbrough, believes he may have made the first step towards arresting his team's slide down the FA Carling Premiership table...

Burns demands end to Celtic disputes

By Our Sports Staff

FACED with the prospect of Celtic's pursuit of Rangers at the top of the Bell's Scottish League premier division...

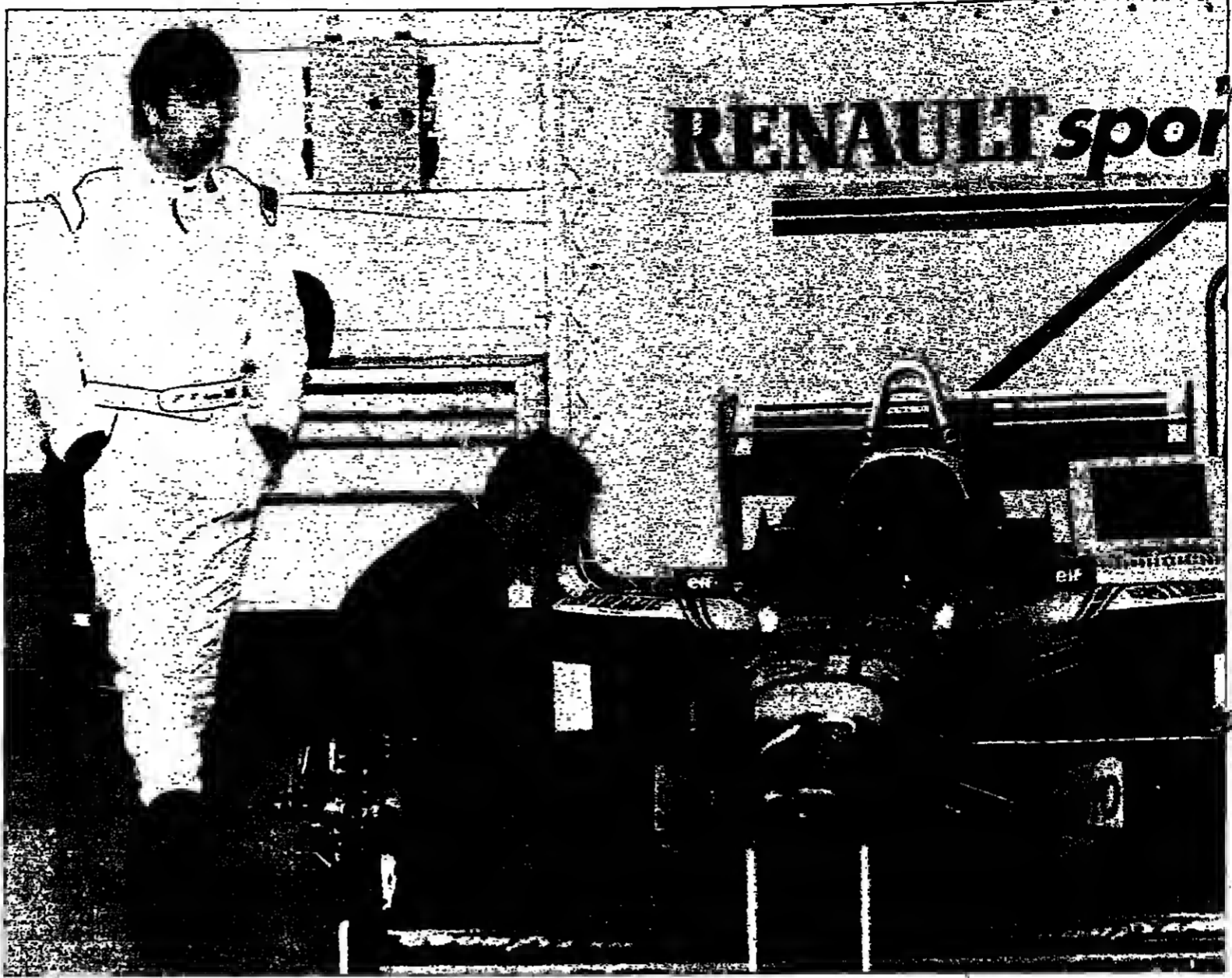
competing for it until the last possible moment. We managed that last season and want to do the same this year...

Van Hooijdonk, who is wrangling over his contract and his long-term future at Celtic, developed a groin strain somewhere between being an unused substitute for Holland against Belgium...

"There are no guarantees of that, but if all we want is to fight with each other, shouting for this player to go or that player to go, or the manager to go, it just causes anarchy...

"The last I saw him he had an ice-pack on his groin in the dressing-room," Burns said. "He can be such an influential player for us and we all look forward to him coming back..."

A career-best five for 37 from Jimmy Adams, the spin bowler, set West Indies on track to victory, made easier by the swashbuckling knock



Heinz-Harald Frentzen and the Williams team conduct business as usual during testing at the Castellet circuit in southern France yesterday

Mosley hints at cancellation of races

By Oliver Holt

MAX MOSLEY, the president of the FIA, the international motor sport federation, last night issued a veiled warning to the Italian motor racing authorities...

year, but Mosley concentrated on the difficulties that may arise because the same charge has been levelled at an FIA official, Roland Brunserade, who was the race director at Formula One events that season...

persuading international officials to carry out their functions at Italian events," Mosley said. "The presence of international officials is essential if a race or rally is to form part of an international championship..."

someone had cut through a brake pipe and you could prove it, then the person responsible would have been in trouble whatever country he was in.

"I am hoping that the Italian Government will look at their law and bring it in line with other countries. It is not realistic to threaten a ban on motor racing in Italy, but if Frank Williams was found guilty I doubt if any team would want to go there and race knowing they could end up in the nick."

Legal quirks, page 12

CRICKET

West Indies discover their fire

WEST INDIES revived their lagging tour in Australia with a seven-wicket victory over Pakistan in the World Series one-day international in Adelaide yesterday...

of Murray, playing as a makeshift opener. Murray, together with Sherwin Campbell (24) hit 69 off 84 balls before Campbell was dismissed by Mushtaq Ahmed...

Pakistan's highly-rated spin attack was dealt with severely by Murray and, later, Lara with Saqlain Mushtaq, man of the match with five wickets against Australia on Sunday, hit for 43 from five overs...

BOXING

Lacklustre Bowe puts Lewis bout in doubt

By Srikumar Sen, Boxing Correspondent

THE proposed bout between Lennox Lewis and Riddick Bowe is in danger of being shelved indefinitely. While Lewis wants to meet Bowe, it is feared that Bowe's dismal performance and win on a disqualification over Andrew Golota last weekend...

September against the winner of the bout between Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson. Tyson and Holyfield meet in Las Vegas. The Briton would consider a bout with Bowe after that.

As the bout depends for its money on pay-per-view, the match may no longer be financially viable. Panos Eliades, Lewis's chief negotiator, said yesterday: "Lennox wants to fight, it is decent money. But if pay-per-view interest has been killed, then the fight's dead."

In the wings is Henry Akinwande, of Britain, the World Boxing Organisation champion, who has also been waiting to meet Lewis should Lewis beat McCall.

FOR THE RECORD

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Table with columns for National League (NFL) and Buffalo 14.

BASKETBALL

Table with columns for National Association (NBA) and Sacramento 97.

CRICKET

Table with columns for World Series and West Indies v Pakistan.

FOOTBALL

Table with columns for FA Carling Premiership and Derby County 0.

GOLF

Table with columns for Sony World Rankings and US unless stated.

HOKEY

Table with columns for New Delhi and India Gandhi Women's Cup.

ICE HOCKEY

Table with columns for National League (NHL) and Tampa Bay 4.

SKING

Table with columns for Madonna di Campitello and Maria World.

TABLE TENNIS

Table with columns for Tianjin and ITF four ranks.

FOOTBALL

Table with columns for FA Carling Premiership and Sheffield Wed 1.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE

Table with columns for Premier division and Eastleigh 1.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE

Table with columns for Premier division and Bamberley 1.

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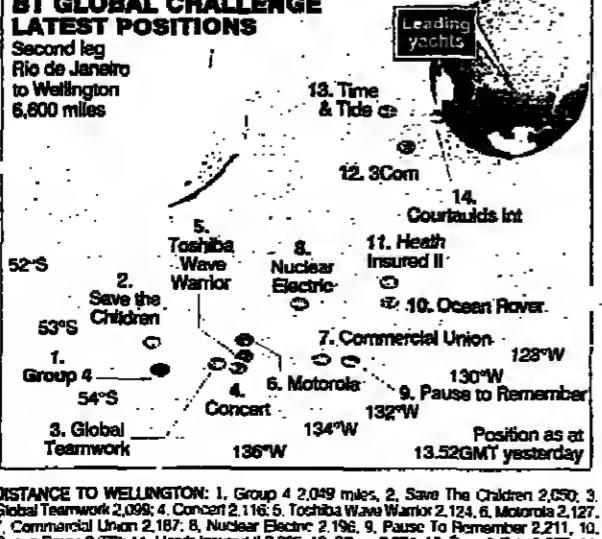


Table with columns for Tennis and various match results including Queen's Club and Wimbledon.

Table with columns for Tennis and various match results including Wimbledon and other tournaments.

Table with columns for Pools Forecasts and various match results for pool games.

Table with columns for Pools Forecasts and various match results for pool games.

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Referees threa

There are two extra coupons (December 26 and January 1) being printed over the Christmas holiday period. Because of the heavy Christmas post, punters are advised to submit all four coupons by the end of this week.

Manchester plan built on City moving home

John Goodbody on the grounds that must be met by the multimillion pound development of English stadiums

Manchester City will have to move its home games from Maine Road to the proposed 60,000-seat stadium in Eastlands if the new venue, using £60 million of lottery money, is to be built in Manchester. Since Wembley Stadium over the past five years has staged annually on average 22 sports and seven entertainment events, it is already financially viable. Most England football internationals, the FA Cup and league cup finals and leading rugby league fixtures will continue to be held there.

Although Maine Road once held 84,569, the largest crowd to watch an English club game outside Wembley, it now has a capacity of 32,344. Despite £19 million having been spent on rebuilding there since the Taylor Report, it lacks any unifying charm.

Manchester City would clearly consider moving back from Moss Side towards its original home in the east of the city. Much will depend on whether the supporters would welcome the move and also on how much it will cost City to rent the stadium.

The Manchester swimming complex is more feasible. It will be situated 1½ miles closer to the city centre, right in the middle of much of the accommodation for nearly 70,000 students and staff of the three universities in the city. There will be plenty of public use after the Games. The complex will cost £29 million.

Wembley now has to look at the various options for the stadium. It must also decide whether to build the venue in stages over three years (when the capacity would be drastically curtailed) or to knock down the existing structure and erect a new arena in an estimated three years, during which time events such as England internationals and the FA Cup Final would be moved elsewhere.

The twin towers will be kept and there will be a new access route to the North Circular Road. The shortfall of about £110 million in the total cost of £230 million will come from private companies and, probably, from football. Graham Kelly, the FA chief executive, confirmed: "In principle, football will be an investor, if, of course, we get the right deal. The FA, FA Premier League and Football League may all consider investments."

RUGBY UNION: WELSH OFFICIALS IN DISPUTE OVER PAYMENT OF MATCH FEES

Referees threaten to strike

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

WHILE the Rugby Football Union's dispute with the leading English clubs may be grinding towards a conclusion this week, the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) has given a twist to the problems of professionalism through their rejection of claims by Welsh referees which now threaten the entire club league programme on Saturday.

scale applied to officials handling games in the top five divisions of the league, but the WRU is willing to go back only so far as December 1, and only for referees handling the top two divisions.

He added, though, that the dispute had endured for 18 months and the society was not inclined to back down.

The WRU is embattled over its £4 million sponsorship agreement with Reebok, the leisurewear company. Leading players, who have been told that they must wear the company's products when on national squad duty, claim that it has cut across existing individual agreements and Leigh Davies, the Cardiff centre, is threatened with a fine by the union for giving a television interview while inappropriately attired.

Coventry dismiss City merger

COVENTRY, who are pushing for promotion from the second division of the Courage Clubs Championship, have turned down the proposal of a merger from Coventry City Football Club and will recommend to members tomorrow the acceptance of an investment from Leander, the property group (David Hands writes).

ever, Bryan Richardson, the Coventry City chairman, expressed surprise that his club's offer had not received a fuller hearing.

missed the recent tour because of injury.

Swansea have been quick to act after seeing the performance of St Helen's on Saturday of Joos Joubert, the Natal centre, during the A international between Wales and South Africa. They spoke with Joubert before he returned home and will contact him in the new year to see if he is interested in joining Swansea.

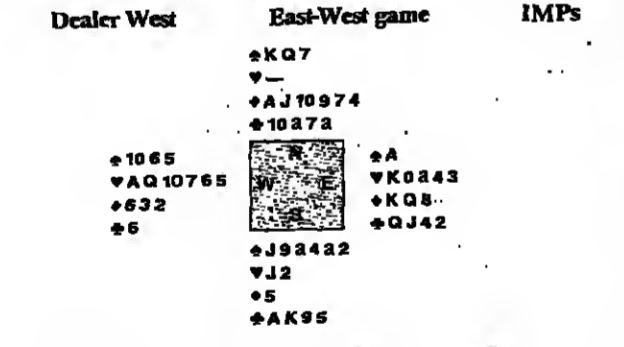


Thomas Sykora, of Austria, won his second World Cup slalom race of the season at Madonna Di Campiglio, Italy, yesterday, but Alberto Tomba, in front of his home supporters, above, snatched the limelight with a remarkable second place on his return from injury. Sykora, who has also had a second place and leads the slalom competition after three races, had an official combined time of 1min 37.90sec on the resort's Canalone Miramonti piste. Tomba, the world and former Olympic champion, who will be 30 tomorrow, clocked 1min 38.48sec and Sebastian Amiez, of France, who fell heavily in the warm-up, was close behind in 1min 38.52sec. It was always going to be Tomba's day regardless of the outcome, but the result was much more than even the most faithful of his followers - who turned out in force with klaxons and banners - expected of him.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

When the dummy has a long side suit but is short in trumps, it is frequently the right defence to force dummy to ruff. This is a hand from the English trials. Senior and I were West and East.



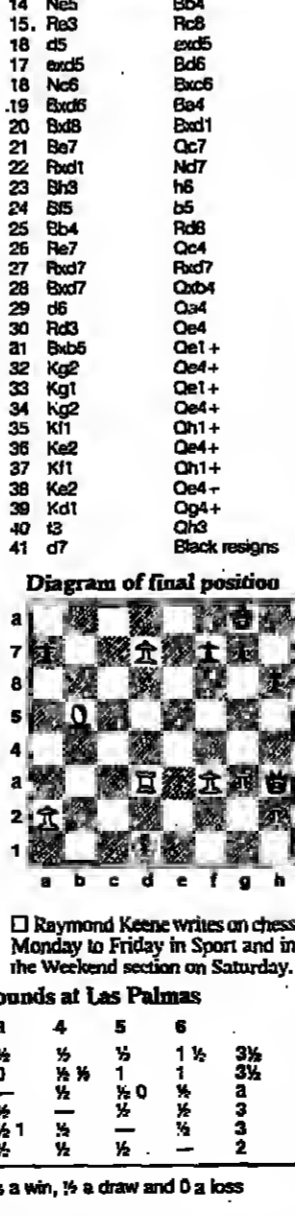
West's Two Hearts was a "weak two". The first trick went seven, jack and ace. Declarer played a diamond to the ace and ruffed a diamond before playing a spade to the king and ace. If East now plays a club and declarer plays low, declarer is home. After West ruffs, declarer will have two entries to dummy (a heart ruff and the queen of spades) to establish and cash the diamonds.

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Kramnik's brilliance

After his loss to Ivanchuk in the fifth round, Vladimir Kramnik struck back to win the best game of the Las Palmas tournament so far, against Viswanathan Anand in the sixth. After a complex tactical sequence in the opening, Kramnik traded in his queen for rook and bishop and a powerful passed pawn in the centre. Having successfully evaded Black's attempts to force a draw by perpetual check, White was in a position to force the promotion of his passed pawn. The game proved a pleasant contrast to the aura of caution and high mutual respect that has characterised many other games in this elite competition.



WORDWATCHING

By Philip Howard

CARRAGEEN a. A Portuguese warship b. Edible seaweed c. Pub chatter	RICHARDINE a. An apple b. Heraldic brown c. A troubador's song
PREE a. To spy on b. A meadow c. A forest	REBUTTER a. Margarine b. A spare top c. A reply

Answers on page 42

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Perez - Lee, correspondence, 1995. White has sacrificed a bishop to weaken the black king. Can you see how he now made the most of his opponent's lack of king protection and his own active pieces?

Whitaker leads the revamped parade

JOHNNY WHITAKER, the highest ranked British rider, and his three Olympic teammates, Nick Skelton, Geoff Billington and Michael Whitaker, head the home entry for the 25th Olympia International Show Jumping Championships, which begin today in The Grand Hall, Olympia.

Save £2 on China exhibition tickets

The Times, in association with the British Museum, gives you the opportunity to get a discount off the price of tickets for the China exhibition. Instead of the full price of £5, Times readers can buy tickets for £3 each.

SAVE THE TIMES EXHIBITION VOUCHER

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BRITISH MUSEUM

CHANGING TIMES

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NATIONAL STADIUM 41

Wembley wins on British sport's £200m payout

SPORT

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 18 1996

ICE HOCKEY 42

Why does Britain's Olympic bid have a Canadian flavour?



Zimbabwe buoyed by England's unimpressive form on eve of inaugural match

Atherton facing test of leadership

FROM SIMON WILDE IN BULAWAYO

MICHAEL ATHERTON sat in the evening sun yesterday, under the shamiana that will act as the players' pavilion at Queens Club during the inaugural Test match between England and Zimbabwe that starts here today.

By leading his country for the 36th successive time today, Atherton will break the England Test record he shares with Peter May, but defeat by the newest and weakest Test nation in the world might jeopardise his chances of remaining in power long enough to fulfil his ambition of having another crack at the Australians next summer.

TEAMS

ZIMBABWE: A D R Campbell (captain), G W Flower, S V Currie, A C Walker, D I Houghton, A Flower, G J White, P A Strang, H H Strang, E A Brandis, H K Olonga.

enough to fulfil his ambition of having another crack at the Australians next summer. He refused to accept that this match has more significance than any other Test, but acknowledged equally that it had special importance to the Zimbabwe players, who say they are keener to beat England than any other side.

Defeat by a country with such a small nucleus of players and with only one win in 20 Test matches ought to be out of the question, but it is longer is. Losses in the past three weeks to a President's XI, Mashonaland and, in the first one-day international against Zimbabwe, have changed that and altered the morale of both camps.



David Lloyd, the England coach, watches as Ian Botham, who is assisting the bowlers, makes a point to the players during net practice at Queens Club yesterday

named yesterday, only Henry Olonga, the fastest bowler on either side, has not played a part in one of the touring side's defeats. Both camps also appear to accept that, given five fine days, there will be a result here.

Britain's imperialist past may have something to do with the fact that the Zimbabweans are so "up for it", but equally potent is the perception that this England team has displayed an arro-

gant disregard for the task it faced here. The decision not to bring in a replacement for Dominic Cork, England's leading strike bowler, when he withdrew shortly before the tour began, hinted at complacency, and David Houghton, the Zimbabwe player-coach, has complained that England have not given enough credit to his bowlers when they have talked about their failure to make big scores. That said,

relations between the sides are cordial. England's problems are not small and they might do themselves a favour by acknowledging that their opponents are a good side who are, in the words of Houghton, "playing the best cricket we have played for many years". One problem not taking the England management greatly is the selection for the game. Having failed to replace Cork, having taken the decision at

an early stage of the tour that Russell, the wicketkeeper, would not feature in the Test side, and then having seen Iran break down, they are choosing from only 12 men, though the party will be supplemented by Craig White next week.

It was England's thinking yesterday that the last place in the side, that of third seamer, was a choice between Caddick and Silverwood, who has yet to play in a Test and has appeared in only three limited-overs matches on this tour. If he does play, he will be the youngest England Test cricketer, at 21 years and nine months, since Mark Lathwell in 1993. By contrast, Zimbabwe's one newcomer is Andy Walker, 37, who has played 30 one-day internationals.

England are therefore set to play two spinners, Tufnell and Croft, an option not being pursued by Zimbabwe, who took the early decision yesterday to omit Andrew Whittall, the off spinner, from their original party of 12.

The square at Queens Club is reckoned to be the fastest and bounciest in the country, and though that may not be saying much, it should help the faster bowlers early in the day. Alistair Campbell, the Zimbabwe captain, expected to put England in if he won the toss.

Were he to do so, it would be imperative that England survived the first hour in some sort of shape, rather than lose three wickets as they did twice during the defeat by Mashonaland. Atherton believes that, if they can do so and go on to build a total in excess of 400, they can then dictate the game. For that to happen, though, the top six must perform well, which probably means Atherton and Thorpe rediscovering their form.

White was officially summoned yesterday to join the party after the hospital tests on Iran's back on Monday revealed a "hot spot" of inflammation. Iran received an injection that will prevent him from bowling for three days, but the management now wants to monitor his progress for at least a week before making a decision on whether he should return home.

White is holidaying in Australia after the end of the England A-team tour there and will join the senior team in Harare next Monday, three days before the start of the second Test.

Mansell's rejection of Jordan flags end of the road

BY OLIVER HOLZ

HE STOPPED short of saying that he had retired but Nigel Mansell effectively brought down the curtain on his illustrious Formula One career yesterday. After one last taste of life close to the edge at a test in Barcelona last week, he telephoned Eddie Jordan yesterday morning to turn down the opportunity to compete in a Jordan-Peugeot next season.

Mansell had come away from the Spanish test brimming with enthusiasm and delighted to be back in the limelight after 18 months away from the sport, apparently itching to make a comeback. Ironically, it seems it may have been the influence of Bernie Ecclestone the man who was put forward as one of the prime movers behind any return, that dissuaded him.

Mansell is believed to have met Ecclestone in London on Monday to discuss his options. After the meeting his enthusiasm had waned considerably and he made Jordan aware of his decision early yesterday. The Irish team may now turn its attention to Martin Brundle, the Italian, Giancarlo Fisichella, or the Frenchman, Jean-Christophe Boullion.

"Nigel Mansell in a Williams could have made a ouisance of himself," Ecclestone said, by way of an epitaph for the career of the 1992 world champion. "But in any other car, he would be really struggling." Mansell, 43, admitted in a statement that he could no longer devote the time necessary for a hectic season to Formula One given his other commitments.

"The idea of the Barcelona test was originally to have some fun," he said, "but my natural competitive instinct took over very quickly and a return to Formula One with Jordan became a serious possibility. However, after consultations with my family and business advisers, I quickly came to realise that my schedule would not permit me to give sufficient time to the Jordan team."

Eddie Jordan, though, still believes Mansell could win races. "He can still be a winner," Jordan said, "but I appreciate the honesty of his decision. The door will always be open for him at Jordan."

Races in doubt, page 41

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solutions.



Botham offers advice to Silverwood, who could make his Test debut today

Trust hits financial problems

THE Football Trust is to turn to the FA Premier League and National Sports Council for help in funding work demanded at grounds by the Taylor Report after encountering a financial crisis. The Trust has been forced to hold back money it had hoped to earmark for stadium work in the lower divisions of the Football League because of the dramatic effect on its income caused by the National Lottery.

FA charges Bristol City

By RUSSELL KEMPRON. "It is one of the most serious incidents we have had this year," Steve Double, an FA spokesman, said yesterday. "We thought some like this had gone away, but, clearly, there is no room for complacency in the fight against football hooliganism." The FA's powers include censure, ground closure or the loss of points. Brighton, the bottom club in the Nationwide third division, have had two points deducted this season after persistent crowd trouble at the Goldstone Ground.

Advertisement for Bass beer featuring a glass and the slogan 'KEEP OFF THE GRASS'.

Large vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page, partially obscured, with text like 'The Embassy si...' and 'Paedophile'.